

Clinton enemies gamble on tapes to finish him off

THE STRATEGY: Republicans are taking a calculated risk and the president's testimony could prove to be their trump card

Martin Kettle in Washington

A DECISION by the Republican majority on the House of Representatives judiciary committee to release video footage of Bill Clinton's testimony would be the clearest indication yet that the president's opponents intend to hang him out to dry — and then drive him from office, if they can.

But a minority of Republicans object to the making public of the four and a half hour videotape of Mr Clinton's August 17 testimony to the grand jury which heard evidence of sex and cover-up allegations in the Monica Lewinsky case.

They argue that a party which condemns the decline of standards in broadcasting and public life would be guilty of double standards by deciding to release the often sexually explicit questioning.

"We don't need to drag ourselves and our children through that," Republican congresswoman Nancy Johnson argued.

But the majority of Republicans on Capitol Hill seem to agree with party leaders' calculations that the release of the tape would do more good than harm to their cause, by weakening public support for Mr Clinton and preparing America for the distasteful step of impeachment.

Mr Clinton remains president because it is difficult to undo an election result and because the opinion polls show continuing solid support for him. Nearly two thirds of Americans believe Mr Clinton is doing a good job as president and are opposed to his resignation or impeachment. In the public's opinion, Mr Clinton should be given a congressional censure and allowed to finish his term.

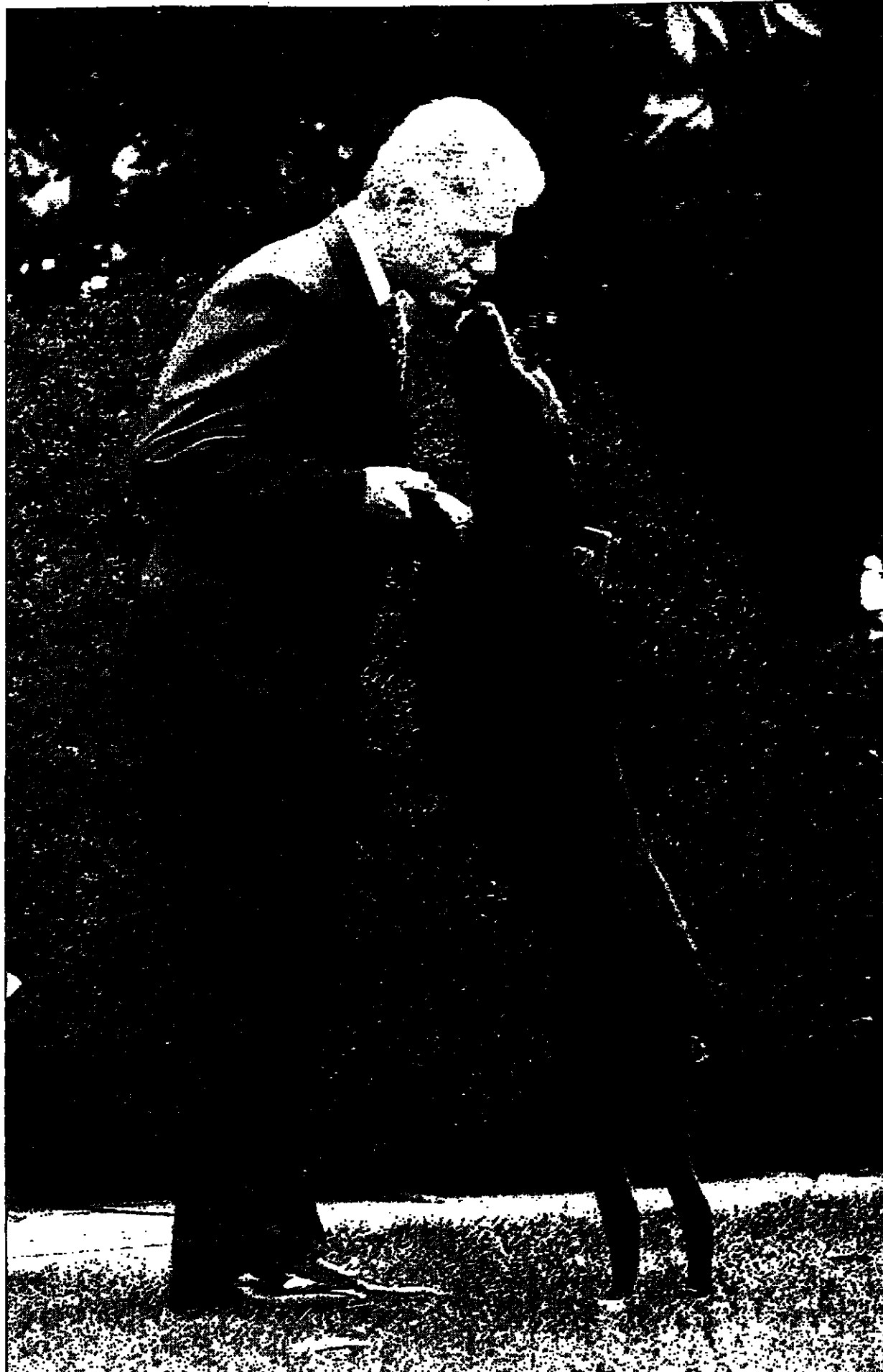
That possible compromise has been much discussed in Washington since the publication of Kenneth Starr's report into the Lewinsky allegations last week. But the overwhelming majority of Republicans have refused to pick up the offer. Led by Trent Lott in the Senate and Newt Gingrich in the House of Representatives, they have opted instead for a strategy of trying to drive down Mr Clinton's popularity.

The videotaped testimony would be a central weapon in this continuing assault on the president, who must regret ever agreeing to the recording of his evidence. He had the choice of going down to the courthouse like everyone else.

Gingrich, the House of Representatives Speaker, hopes the tape's contents would appeal voters who have stood by the president so far, stripping Mr Clinton of the allure of office and exposing him both as a liar — the key to impeachment — and as evasive and untrustworthy — the key to puncturing his reputation. The Republicans are calculating that broadcasts of the testimony would be received with shock similar to that which greeted the release of the Nixon Watergate tapes in 1974.

Mr Gingrich is particularly anxious to break the Democrats' traditional hold on the female vote. In the Republican caucus this week he went out of his way to stress that the tape would show that Mr Clinton is a misogynist.

If the tape is made public, next week's opinion polls will be even more crucial than usual, indicating whether Mr Clinton's reputation is fatally holed, or whether he is politically invulnerable. The former is found to be the case, the Republicans are hoping that Democrats in Congress,



Buddy, the Clintons' dog, shows his master yesterday that someone still loves the beleaguered president

who have mostly kept their anger with Mr Clinton to themselves, will begin to go public in an attempt to save their own electoral skins.

That would be a win-win situation for the Republicans, who could press forward looking for big gains in mid-term elections on November 3, and move towards impeachment, probably early next year.

The key to the Republican strategy is that it would allow them to continue to drop embarrassing material into the public domain if it looked likely to increase the pressure

on the Democrats and Mr Clinton, while allowing them to hold off and rethink if the video is released to public indifference or distaste.

Republicans are beginning to think that, if their plan is successful, they might win enough Senate seats to take their total from its current 55 to more than 67 — a two-thirds majority — giving them enough votes to impeach Mr Clinton next year without Democratic help.

But there remains the danger that it could all backfire. Democrats hope the release of

the tape would not merely embarrass Republican voters who share Ms Johnson's qualms, but that it could make a martyr of Mr Clinton, mobilising a sympathy vote on the basis that the release is vindictive. The president's supporters also hope that Americans would view the release as a politically motivated act of lawlessness, because grand jury testimony is traditionally secret and sacred.

The real possibility of such a backlash was underlined yesterday when Congress ral-

lied instantly around the judiciary committee chairman, Henry Hyde, after a leak to the on-line Salon magazine forced him to confess to an adulterous affair in the 1990s. What started as an attempt to smear Mr Hyde rapidly became a backlash against the White House's widely assumed — though indignantly denied — role in planting the story.

If Republican calculations are wrong, then Mr Clinton could end up receiving the same sort of sympathy that Mr Hyde was gathering yesterday.



President Clinton waves as he boards Air force One for a fundraising trip to Cincinnati yesterday

White House fears impact of 'weaselly' clips

THE TAPE: Tantrums add to Republican arsenal

Julian Borger in Washington

IT WOULD be one of the great ironies of the Clinton presidency if the loquacious son of Arkansas were to be skewered by the very medium he has used for so long to maintain his mastery of the political process.

Perhaps even more than Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton has been able to manipulate camera angles and deploy sincere glances to commune directly with the American people. But his grand jury testimony is one personal appearance he definitely does not want broadcast to the nation.

During his testimony on August 17, relayed to the courthouse by an encrypted video feed from the White House, Mr Clinton is reported to have become evasive and then "exploded in anger" at the relentless questioning by prosecutor Kenneth Starr's legal team on intimate details of his sexual encounters with Monica Lewinsky.

Some accounts, presumably leaked by Mr Starr's office, said he looked "weaselly". Others say he lost his temper completely at one point and stormed out of the room. He is said at other points to have refused to answer questions.

The testimony lasted for more than four hours but cable news channels are planning to air it in its entirety once it is released, and the big national networks will show substantial excerpts. Democrat officials fear

what might happen next. They expect the most controversial, short-tempered moments will be picked out and broadcast repeatedly for weeks on current affairs programmes, and then in Republican campaign advertisements for the November mid-term elections. The context — hours of repetitive and highly personal questioning — would have been edited out.

In the 1992 presidential campaign, the Democrats used a video of George Bush promising: "Read my lips. No new taxes" to devastating effect on an electorate well aware of subsequent tax hikes. The use of a video showing a president misleading his people could now backfire on them.

Pictures of President Clinton ducking and weaving around grand jury questioning could become as familiar as the national television-dominated consciousness as Kennedy's assassination.

And then there is the question of what damaging material has yet to spring from the boxes of evidence delivered to Congress by Mr Starr.

The House of Representatives judiciary committee could also decide to release audiotapes of messages left by Mr Clinton on Ms Lewinsky's telephone answering machine. The words do not add up to much on paper, but their interpretation might depend on tone of voice.

It is also possible that tapes made by Linda Tripp, a former friend of Ms Lewinsky, of phone calls between the two could be released, in which case the American public may hear their president described repeatedly by his young girlfriend as the "big creep" or "shamuck". For a president anxious about how he will be remembered by his countrymen, that would surely be the bitterest pill.

'Turn off your TV and get yourself a life'

POPULAR REACTION: Some urge a boycott on the sordid details, but others call for the chance to judge for themselves

Julian Borger in Washington

"TAPES? Haven't the American people seen enough? I won't watch them. I'm going to turn off my TV in protest."

Thus Alice Wright, a 49-year-old Washingtonian, launched what she called "my own little boycott movement" on Capitol Hill yesterday. Mrs Wright had raised herself from her sickbed and by late morning was marching up and down under the tulip trees on the west lawn holding aloft a home-made placard which read: "Haven't you crucified the President enough

via the Internet. Don't release the testimony tapes."

It was a polite protest. She made no attempt to heckle the lines of visitors waiting for their chance to view the seat of American legislative power, where the House Judiciary Committee was at that moment engulfed in a quarrel over whether to release the videotape of the president's testimony on his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

The crowd outside was every bit as divided between their right to know and their right not to be acquainted with yet more sordid details. "People need to know all the evasiveness they've been talking about in the news-

papers, so seeing will be believing," said David Boyer, a 39-year-old Republican from Cleveland, Ohio.

On the issue of the impact of yet more discussion of oral sex on the moral sensitivities of the nation, Mr Boyer said Americans were sensible enough to make their own decisions.

"If you're a responsible parent, if you don't want your children to see this, then you won't let it happen."

Bob Rader's argument was that the people should get their money's worth after being billed \$40 million for the Starr investigation into the president's conduct.

"The taxpayers subsidised it and they should be shown the results so they can judge for themselves. We should have full disclosure," said Mr Rader, a retired civil servant.

Jim and Betty Bowie disagreed completely. They had come all the way from Texas just to get a feel for the power

and majesty emanating from Washington's pristine white palaces. They did not want that sense of awe sullied by videotapes.

"I think they should treat the office of president with some respect," said Mr Bowie.

"They have already asked him all this. We already know it. I think that if they keep pursuing him, there will be a backlash."

Mrs Bowie agreed. "It's sexual titillation — that's all it is."

Alice Wright was clearly among friends. "America needs to wake up," she declared.

"I am on medical disability and I should be in bed, but I felt so strongly about this. Clinton is working on issues that are important to my life, like medical aid and social welfare and gun control. His sex life is not important to me."

"There's a book I read in

college. It's called 1984. If they release those tapes, it will be the beginning of 1984, when no one's life is private."

However, both opponents and supporters of disclosure agreed that the broadcast of President Clinton giving testimony was unlikely to have much effect on the mood of the American public, which had already been subjected to months of blanket coverage of the affair.

Most said that the very fact they had taken the time to see the Capitol showed they made a distinction between their leaders and the high offices they held.

Mr Rader said he still had plenty of respect for the latter. "The people who wrote the constitution were pretty smart. We have checks and balances. We've had a president killed in office and a president resign in office. We survived that and we will always survive. It's the best government in the world."

Publishers give Lewinsky the cold shoulder

KISS AND TELL: We don't like the lady, says the book trade, but some believe it may all be a ploy to drive down the price

Mark Tran in New York

MONICA Lewinsky, the most exposed woman in America, is finding it difficult to interest publishers in her White House adventure because, amid distaste for the whole episode, so much has already emerged in the explicit Starr report.

Five publishers said they were approached by Ms Lew-

insky's representative Judy Smith about an expose of her time at the White House. One publisher said he had already turned the book down.

"I'm as big a whore as anyone, but I'd rather die first," the executive said.

Another voiced revulsion at the Lewinsky affair. "The more I read about her, the less I like her."

Reports of the publishing world's lack of interest in Ms

Lewinsky's book may be a bargaining ploy to drive down the price. Ms Lewinsky is reportedly seeking \$6 million, as big as the advance received by General Colin Powell.

While Ms Lewinsky may not get what she is seeking, it seems inevitable that a book by her will appear. Publishers did not allow their distaste for O.J. Simpson to prevent them from bidding for I Want to Tell You, which became a No. 1 bestseller.

While Ms Lewinsky is peddling her tale, the Starr report has become an instant best-seller with 1 million copies out this week. By early October, Dove Audio, which produced an audiotape of

President Nixon's Watergate tapes, plans a \$20 seven-hour audio of the Starr report read by actors David Ackroyd and Tracy Brooks Swape. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz reads the White House rebuttal.

The Starr report has had other effects on the publishing world. Little, Brown announced it was postponing the publication of All Too Human by the former White House aide and Clinton confidant George Stephanopoulos, who had received a \$2.7 million advance.

The book has been further delayed to allow Mr Stephanopoulos "to integrate these momentous events [in the Starr report] into the story".

Other authors have benefited from the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr triangle.

The Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals by William Bennett, a conservative pundit, and Ann Coulter's High Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Case Against Bill Clinton, are both rising in the best-seller lists.

Simon & Schuster is rushing out two books: The Clinton Enigma: A Four-and-a-Half Minute Speech Reveals This President's Entire Life by Washington Post reporter David Maraniss, and ... And the Horse He Rode in On: The People v Kenneth Starr by Clinton defender James Carville.

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Jail threat to scout leader in sex case

Sarah Hall

A SCOUT leader who had a year-long affair with a 14-year-old she seduced during scout camp faces up to 18 months in prison after being found guilty yesterday of indecent assault.

Sarah Hubert, a 25-year-old dog handler from Bournemouth, Sussex, who enjoyed weekly sex sessions with her teenage lover, will be sentenced at the Old Bailey next month on two specimen charges.

Yesterday she choked back tears and held her head in her hands as the jury at Bournemouth crown court delivered its verdict after two hours of deliberation. She was bailed for pre-sentence reports.

After the hearing the father of the boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, spoke of the devastation the relationship had caused his family. "The effect has been absolutely terrible but we have coped," he said.

The father, who condemned the affair as "sordid and immoral" in court, said he had been "very, very hurt" by the failure of the scouting authorities to act sooner to end the relationship. "It has been totally unnecessary. It should never have gone this far."

During the three-day trial the court heard the couple began their affair after snatching a kiss in a scout hut on their troop's annual camp in December 1996. The relationship developed with the boy having sex with the woman at least once a week from March 1997 to February 1998. "I love her and have loved her for about a year and a bit," he told the court.

The affair came to light when the boy's father discovered one of more than 50 letters from Hubert in the boy's bedroom. He challenged his son, who admitted he was "in love with her," before confronting Hubert in September 1997, demanding she stay away from the boy. He also telephoned Hubert's father and contacted the boy's teachers and scout leaders. On March 9 he wrote to the dis-

trict commissioner of the scouts, telling her: "This immoral, sordid affair was must stop now." He then reported the matter to the police.

After the verdict — at which Hubert was cleared of one count of attempting to pervert the course of justice — the Scouts Association denied it had been lax in taking action against the troop leader, who had been a venture scout and worked her way up through the organisation from the age of 15.

Spokesman John Fogg said the keen band member — described by her lawyer as a "young woman of good character" — had been suspended on March 13, four days after the boy's father had written to the district commissioner. She had then been invited to resign on March 21, and did so on March 25. The next day charges were brought.

He said the organisation's rules banned relationships between scout members and leaders. "Clearly the case has been distressing for everyone involved."

Legal experts last night predicted Hubert could face up to 18 months in prison, but said six months would be a more probable sentence. She could alternatively be put on probation, as the relationship appeared to be consensual, a criminal lawyer said.

Letters, page 13



Sarah Hubert: weekly sex sessions with boy, 14



The way they were... The Union flag takes pride of place as Margaret Thatcher gets an ovation at the 1983 Conservative conference in Blackpool

PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

Tories lower the flag and bring on the sofas for image-changing coffee table conference

Lucy Ward and Ewen MacAskill

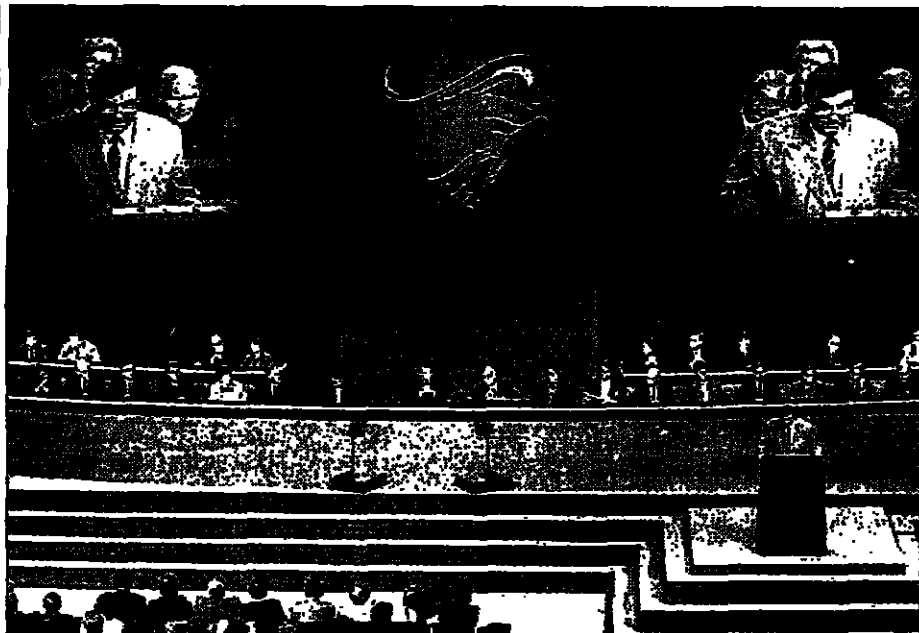
WHEN Labour needed new campaign ideas, it looked across the Atlantic to Little Rock, Arkansas. The Conservatives, however, are looking to the comfy sofas of breakfast television.

Conservative Central Office revealed yesterday it is to revamp this year's annual party conference, ditching decades-old traditions. Out go big, sky-blue podiums: in come coffee tables and easy chairs in vivid red, green, yellow and blue.

The new boys at Central Office, led by the Asda chairman Archie Norman, want a less stuffy conference. And, in a direct parallel with Labour's downgrading of the Red Flag, even the traditional end-of-conference song Land Of Hope And Glory is no longer sacrosanct.

Out goes the jingoistic razzamatazz associated with the leader's speech. No longer will the leader be engulfed in a sea of balloons and Union flags.

The party once prided itself on building ever-bigger podiums, one so big the cabinet were barely visible from the conference floor. At Bournemouth next month cabinet members will be seated in a semi-circle around coffee



Big platforms for the cabinet line-up and autotunes for conference speakers in the familiar style in 1994 — but this year the party plans a new look

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

tables at floor level, the better to bond with party representatives. A party spokesman, hopeful that the change will banish memories of triumphalist rallies of old, said: "The aim is to showcase a different kind of Conservative Party."

The radical makeover of the event, part of William Hague's effort to haul the party back to electability by

projecting a "listening" image, should ring bells with Labour's image men.

Just as they sought to modernise the party with a "New" prefix and a dose of Cool Britannia, so the Tories have decided that soft furnishings and a suitably humble slogan (Listening. Learning. Leading) could help symbolise the transformation they hope dis-

enchanted voters will believe in.

In a change unthinkable even two years ago, at John Major's last conference as prime minister, the Tory rebranding could extend to dropping the decades-old rendition of Land Of Hope And Glory. Mr Hague's setpiece address is to be moved from the traditional Friday slot to

Shades of blue

What's in and out at the Tory Conference

In	Out
Cool Britannia	Rule Britannia
Cozy chairs	Poliburo desks
Primary colours	Tory blue
Eye contact	Autotunes
Ambient sounds	Rousing anthems
Listening and learning	Lecturing and lambasting
Puffblows	Suits and ties

Thursday to avoid being followed by the patriotic anthem accompanied by flag-waving, balloons and wild cheering. This year's event will be rounded off after a closing speech by incoming party chairman Michael Ancram to the strains of the 84-piece Bournemouth Youth Orchestra playing "patriotic songs from the four corners of the UK".

Party managers are deeply wary of any hint of triumphalism and believe pomp and circumstance should be replaced with post-defeat contrition and renewal. The new design by international events organiser Michael Lockett — also charged with presenting the Government's Millennium celebrations, is setting pulses racing in the Tories' Smith Square headquarters.

The traditional division between politicians on stage and party faithful in the audience is to be abolished. The set, lit in vivid primary shades with lights claimed to be "the most powerful in the world", will be bare except for one lectern, backed by a giant video screen.

In an attempt to create an "in the round" feel, shadow cabinet members will cluster around two low round tables. A second podium will jut out into the audience.

The autotune for speakers will be banished. Party managers believe the device creates a barrier between speakers and audience, and reduces the impression of sincerity. Instead, speakers will have to rely on written texts, and will be encouraged to make eye contact with the audience.

"The whole concept should scream 'The Conservative Party has changed'," said a party spokesman. Travesties was to view the whole action through the prism of a minor consular official, thereby allowing us to see Joyce, Tzara and Lenin through a comically distorting perspective.

Martin is obviously sincere in his admiration of Picasso and Einstein and in his belief that the century will be remembered for its artists and scientists rather than its politicians. But the giveaway comes when he introduces the ghost of Elvis and when he has

Sponsored referees planned

continued from page 1

aces and find sponsors were already well in place before the approach made by the lobbyists.

"They came to us with an idea but we were well placed to do all the work ourselves. We don't need this firm and the issue of professional referees has been on the agenda for some time."

Premier League officials were quick to point out last night the use of video replays would not interrupt the flow of a game and that it would be difficult to use them in sub-

jective decisions like awarding free kicks and red cards.

The professional referees will also be given media training and will be encouraged to explain their decisions to the press. In between games, they will be expected to train and liaise with the media.

Mr Don, a former Premier League and FIFA referee, added: "Most fans will be very happy, but we have to put an attractive package together to get the right referees and give them something to justify giving up their day jobs."

Picasso incorporate him into the famous trio announcing "we're all originals". Suddenly the play seems less about genius than the American worship of celebrity.

It is a whimsically playful piece all too reminiscent, in its pre-awareness of history, of the melodrama recorded by Max Beerbohm in which the departing hero announced to the heroine, "I am going forth to the Thirty Years War." But Randall Arney, who staged the original Steppenwolf pro-

duction, directs it with considerable élan. Ben Walden lends Picasso the right fierce intensity. Brian Shelley endows Einstein with an eccentric certainty and there is a nice study in shrugging cynicism from Kenneth Gilbert as a local bar-fly. But this is clearly the work of an American in Paris; and one who approaches European genius on his knees rather than in a spirit of intellectual enquiry.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday

Feelgood factor that mops up sense of cerebral challenge

Review

Michael Billington

Picasso at the Lapin Agile, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds

STEVE MARTIN is a funny man. But his much-acclaimed Picasso at the Lapin Agile, getting its European premiere, is not so much a

play of ideas as an idea for a play. It posits the notion of a meeting between Picasso and Einstein in a Paris bar in 1904 but it never develops into much more than a feelgood celebration of individual genius.

What Martin has created is a kind of foresight saga. At one point the patron's mistress accurately predicts the coming century from Hiroshima to the banning of smoking in restaurants. And when Picasso and Einstein finally meet they

seem fatally conscious of their place in history.

Admittedly there is some token skirmishing over the respective merits of art and science, but the twin heroes quickly subscribe to the freemasonry of genius. Einstein, glancing at a sketch Picasso has donated to a passing lover, rhapsodises: "I wouldn't have thought the 20th century would be handed to me so casually." For his part, Picasso soon recognises a kindred spirit for whom a scientific

theory is a thing of perfect aesthetic beauty.

You go expecting some sense of intellectual challenge: what you get is a mutual love-in. Martin's sense of irony also seems rather clunking when compared to that of Stoppard in the not-dissimilar Travesties. To point up the maleness of history, Martin briefly introduces a bumptious inventor convinced that his brittle building material will change the century. But Stoppard's masterstroke in

Travesties was to view the whole action through the prism of a minor consular official, thereby allowing us to see Joyce, Tzara and Lenin through a comically distorting perspective.

Martin is obviously sincere in his admiration of Picasso and Einstein and in his belief that the century will be remembered for its artists and scientists rather than its politicians. But the giveaway comes when he introduces the ghost of Elvis and when he has

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Met denies racism over Lawrence

David Pallister

SIR Paul Condon, the Metropolitan police commissioner, yesterday accepted that aspects of the investigation into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence could be perceived as evidence of a subliminal culture of racism in the force.

But in the Met's compendious submissions to the public inquiry he denied accusations that the service was institutionally racist "knowingly as a matter of policy" — the narrow definition adopted by Lord Scarman after the Brixton riots.

The inquiry also heard sharp criticism from the counsel for three superintendents in charge of the investigation who claimed that Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen, and their lawyer, Imran Khan, should take some responsibility for the breakdown of family liaison because of their mistrust and hostility towards the police. "Mrs Lawrence," said Sonia Woodley QC, "had been anti-police for years."

Earlier Jeremy Gompertz QC, representing the commissioner, accepted many mistakes, some serious, had been made. "Cumulatively they may amount to systemic breakdown," he said. But the police did "not accept that the number of errors — or indeed their gravity — show that there must have been racism or corruption at work in the investigation team."

These charges have been made to the inquiry by Michael Mansfield QC, for the Lawrence family, who has argued that racism permeated the investigation and that of-

ficers colluded with criminal families in south London to protect the five suspects.

Stephen was stabbed to death by a bus stop in Eltham, south London, by a gang of white youths who have never been convicted.

Drawing on 350 pages of at times contradictory submissions, Mr Gompertz opened his remarks with a foreword by Sir Paul who said: "I deeply regret that, in our efforts to pursue justice for Stephen and his family, the Metropolitan Police Service fell short of the standards to which we aspire." On the issue of racism, Mr Gompertz admitted the police team had not received racial awareness training. This led to a failure to treat Stephen's friend, Duwayne Brooks, who was with him on the night, as a victim as well as a witness. Some officers refused to accept that the murder was racially motivated. Others had been "culturally insensitive" and "racially unaware" when dealing with the Lawrence family, while a few used "inappropriate" language.

Mr Gompertz said seven officers had used words — "coloured", "negro" and "nigger" — considered offensive by the black community. But the police submission concludes: "Even allowing for some racist inference to be drawn, these represent isolated areas and do not 'permeate' the entire investigation."

Ms Woodley, who represented detective superintendents Ian Crampton and Brian Weeden and Detective Chief Superintendent William Isley, defended their conduct of the investigation which, she said, was severely inhibited by a lack of resources. The failure to arrest the five suspects for two weeks was a fine judgment based on the assumption that any forensic evidence would have been disposed of.



Michael Menson's sister, Essie, and brother, Kwesi. "From the start the police have treated the case with grudging interest and reluctance," she said

Black victim's family fights for facts

Amelia Gentleman on relatives who feel police denied answers

THE family of Michael Menson, who burned to death 19 months ago, apparently because of the colour of his skin, is not only still reeling from the loss but also from the continuing ordeal they have faced ever since.

His sister, Essie Menson, a paediatrician at the Royal Sussex county hospital in Brighton, yesterday spoke of the personal crisis engulfing her family. Having followed

the prolonged ordeal of Stephen Lawrence's family, Essie Menson was horrified to find a similar drama being played out in her own life.

"I remember saying to friends at the beginning of the Stephen Lawrence case 'how awful for anyone to have to go through that battle for justice'," she said.

"Everything that was revealed by that case was very disturbing for us and must have been for most

black families. To find that it's still going on now, despite reassurances to the contrary, bears really heavily on the heart."

What the family contends is "still going on" is that the claims made by black victims of crime are not being investigated by the police. Ms Menson told the Guardian of her family's distress at seeing their brother seriously ill in hospital, which was immediately compounded by the police's "offensive" and "insensitive" attitude to them.

"The police paid only one visit to the family while Michael was in hospital. After his death two liaison officers were assigned to us, apparently to give us the assurance that an investigation was going on, but there was nothing to demonstrate that that was the case."

The family is lodging a formal complaint with the Police Complaints Authority. They are demanding that it investigates why officers initially assumed Mr Menson had set himself alight and failed to treat the incident as a crime, why police neglected to take a statement from him when he was in hospital and why no apology has ever been made to his relatives.

"From the start the police have treated the case with grudging interest and reluctance, at best. It has been a



Michael Menson, who died after being set on fire

constant battle to get them to treat Michael's death with the gravity it deserved."

"All the time we asked questions that we felt as relatives it was not unreasonable to pose, but... over and over again we were told that we could not be given basic bits of information about the investigation because of 'operational reasons'."

Inevitably, it has occurred to the Menson family that the

police's flawed handling of Michael's death had its roots in racial prejudice. But both Essie and Michael's brother, Kwesi, 34, insisted that they were reluctant to be forced into this accusatory position.

"We have certainly been treated in an appalling way. It may well be because we're black, it may well be because Michael had a history of problems, with mental health... But to accuse a whole police force of racism would be making the same blanket assumptions and mistakes that the police made about Michael."

Many of Michael Menson's 10 brothers and sisters have been battling for months to find answers to the remaining questions about how he died.

A letter drafted by the Mensons' solicitors will call on the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to bring in a new, independent police force to investigate how Mr Menson came to be wandering almost naked, his clothes burned from his body, and his back still smouldering, in a London street. He died from his burns and an inquest ruled on Wednesday that he had been unlawfully killed.

College role in broader A level courses

Donald MacLeod

UNIVERSITIES must help to break the stranglehold of the narrow A level curriculum in England and Wales, Baroness Blackstone, Education and Employment Minister, said yesterday.

She told the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals' annual conference in Manchester that A levels were channelling 16-year-olds into two or three subjects had be-
devilled English and Welsh education for too long. "It is increasingly clear that the traditional model is wrong, both for young people themselves and for the nation," she added.

The Government was attempting to introduce a Scottish-style system in which pupils would study five subjects. A vocational qualification equivalent to one A level was being introduced and a qualification in skills like communication and information technology was being piloted.

However reforms could be undermined if admissions officers continued to insist on three good A levels as the only basis for entry, she said. "Before putting on new courses, schools and colleges as well as their students should look carefully at what universities are requiring for entry. The reforms we are introducing should provide young people with broader and deeper understanding and better developed key skills than typical school sixth forms have produced in the past."

Martin Harris, chairman of the CVCP, said universities would welcome broader courses in schools, but warned they could have a knock-on effect and increase the number of four-year and masters degrees. "There is a challenge for all of us in reconciling a broader 16 to 18 curriculum with one of the shortest degree courses in the western world within present resources," Professor Harris said.

Announcing a £5 million scheme to give free tuition to part-time students on benefits, Baroness Blackstone said universities must make more imaginative efforts to recruit students from working class and ethnic minority families.



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Police fear development of gambling on Internet

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

POLICE officers and the gaming industry are concerned about the growth of "virtual casinos" and unrestricted gambling on the Internet, it emerged yesterday.

Detective Chief Superintendent Keith Akerman, chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' computer crime group, said yesterday that gambling on the Internet was being investigated.

He said it was now possible for Internet users to play games like roulette, blackjack in virtual casinos.

Mr Akerman, who heads Hampshire's CID, was speaking at the launch of a series of seminars between police and Internet Service Providers. The aim of the meetings is to ensure that criminal investigations involving the Internet are carried out lawfully.

"Gambling is a cause for concern," said Mr Akerman. He said that people running virtual casinos or bookmakers on the Internet would be able to obtain the credit card details of gamblers and thus put them at risk.

Tom Kavanagh, secretary to the Gaming Board, said yesterday that although it was illegal to set up a virtual casino in Britain, punters were able to gamble on the Internet via virtual casinos set up, for instance, in the Caribbean where it was not against the law.

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Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Mandelson addressing the TUC yesterday, when he declared that the relationship between employer and employee was 'an unequal one' which could be exploited by 'unscrupulous employers'. PHOTOGRAPH: DON MAPIER



Mandelson vows 'no more spin, honest'

Seamus Milne and David Goss

PETER Mandelson, the Trade and Industry Secretary and the politician most closely linked with moves to distance Labour from the trade unions, yesterday said he wanted to see unions strengthened — and offered himself to the TUC as a man modern unions could do business with.

In a strikingly conciliatory overtone, Tony Blair's closest ally in government said he "believed" in trade unions, which were a "force for good in society" and a "voice of direct workplace experience" in public policy-making.

The former TUC backroom boy who has helped to make support for big business an article of New Labour faith, told delegates the relationship between employer and employee was "by its nature a fundamentally unequal one", which could be exploited by "unscrupulous employers".

It had been widely expected that Mr Mandelson would face heckling, and although he arrived to be greeted by applause, punctuated by a few hisses, he left to polite applause. The choice for the union movement, he said, was "opposition or legitimate influence. I know my preference. It is for trade unions that draw increased strength from being modern, democratic, representative and influential."

that "no decisions have been taken to privatise the Post Office" — to the relief of the Communication Workers' Union — although he did not rule out any sale of shares in the profitable publicly-owned business.

Derek Hodgson, CWU joint general secretary, said he was pleased Mr Mandelson had confirmed publicly what he had told him privately. "This government has brought a bit of stability to the PO and I am pleased they have scotched the rumours that were unsettling its employees."

The address was in marked contrast to the critical approach Mr Mandelson has taken towards trade unionism in the past, and was welcomed by TUC general secretary John Monks, who called it "an endorsement of modern trade unionism and partnership in the workplace".

Ken Jackson, leader of the rightwing Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, said he agreed with "every word" of Mr Mandelson's speech. More left-leaning union leaders said it went down well with most delegates — although one complained he had been "betrayed".

But Mr Mandelson, who promised he would always be straight with the unions — "no more spin, honest" — also warned that Mr Blair's government would "never be a soft touch", and that modernisation would have to be "never-ending" if unions were to be effective.

In a more characteristic passage, he said unions needed to "actively work for and welcome profits" and show "moderation" in wage demands and flexibility in pay levels in times of economic difficulty.

Leader comment, page 13

'Healthy' man suffered heart attack after Viagra

Sarah Bosseley Health Correspondent

A MAN who had no known previous relevant medical problems has had a severe heart attack half an hour after taking a tablet of Viagra which he obtained during a trip to the United States.

The case is bound to fuel concerns about the safety of the impotence pill which received its Europe-wide licence this week but was temporarily banned from NHS prescription.

Ministers are concerned about the potentially huge bill if all the 10 per cent of men in Britain who are impotent demand it from their doctors.

There have been 68 deaths among men taking Viagra in the United States, where in the six months since it was licensed by the Food and Drug Administration, 4 million prescriptions have been

written. But, say makers Pfizer, nearly all those who died had heart problems that could have affected them at any time, while others were taking other drugs containing nitrates, which react badly with Viagra.

But the case reported in this week's *Lancet* by the drug safety unit of the inspectorate of health care in the Netherlands is harder to answer because the victim — who survived — was in apparent good health before he took his tablet.

The man was 65 years old, reported J Feenstra and colleagues. While in the United States, he was prescribed Viagra by a doctor. He was given a medical examination before collecting his tablets.

He did not have high blood pressure, diabetes or previous heart disease. He was not on any sort of medication, nor, say the authors, nor had he used "poppers" (amyl nitrate) as a sexual stimulant,

which are dangerous in combination with Viagra.

He did not smoke and drank on average five units of alcohol a week. There was no family history of coronary heart disease.

But 30 minutes after taking one 50mg tablet of Viagra, he began to experience acute pain in the left side of his chest and was rushed to hospital.

The chest pains occurred before any attempt at sexual intercourse was made — Viagra is supposed to be taken an hour before — so, say the authors, "sexual exertion cannot be regarded as the precipitating factor".

The Dutch team believes that Viagra was the cause of the heart attack, but they point out that despite the man's general health, they cannot know for certain that he did not have any sort of pre-existing arterial disease.

Although substantial clinical trials were carried out on Viagra before it was licensed, "the numbers of patients included in trials are low compared to the expected use of sildenafil [Viagra]".

Some adverse reactions to the pill may not yet have emerged, they suggest. "The number of reported adverse reactions to sildenafil is likely to increase when it is taken by large numbers of men."

A Pfizer spokesman said the authors could not exclude pre-existing coronary artery disease. "This does not constitute any proof of a causal relationship between Viagra and the heart attack," he said.

Many who died from heart attacks showed no signs of coronary disease beforehand, he said. Given the age group most likely to use Viagra, "it wouldn't be unexpected if there were several cases of patients on Viagra dying, let alone having a heart attack", he said.

News in brief

Master of the Rolls spends time inside

THE Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, said last night that he and his wife Marguerite, a magistrate, had agreed to be banged up for a night in Brixton prison to gain some insight into the jail experience.

The couple will exchange their South Kensington house for a cell on the night of October 1, the first day of the legal year. They will be among 200 lawyers, police officers, probation officers and others working in the justice system who have agreed to be locked up overnight.

The volunteers will be sponsored for at least £50 each to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Relief. They will stay in a refurbished, unoccupied wing, and follow a normal prison timetable. — *Clare Dyer*

Mother pleads for children

THE natural mother of missing sisters Jade and Hannah Bennett yesterday pleaded with their foster parents for their safe return as it emerged the family disappeared hours before the youngsters were due to be handed back to social services.

Jackie Bennett, who gave her three- and four-year-old daughters up for adoption, said: "I want them to know I want the children returned safely. I love them very much and I am going to get them back."

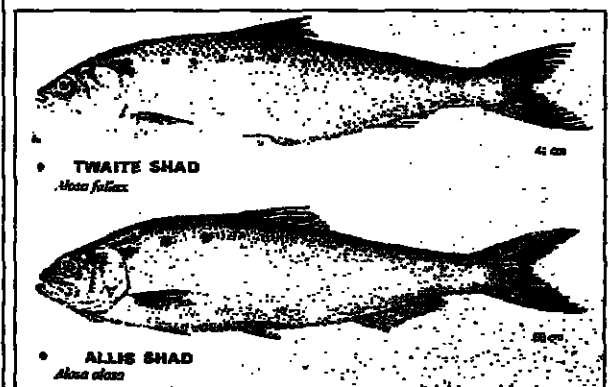
"I know they have done what they have done because they love Jade and Hannah but if they leave it too long they are going to be in serious trouble."

The 24-year-old's appeal came as police admitted they had found no trace of Jeffrey and Jennifer Bramley, who disappeared with the girls shortly before they were due to meet Cambridge-shire social services on Monday morning to hand them over to be fostered with another couple. — *Sarah Hall*

Medical soaps 'mislead'

THE chances of surviving after resuscitation following a heart attack are a lot higher in Chicago Hope or ER than they are in Casualty or Cardiac Arrest, but it is the American TV viewing public who are in danger of getting the wrong idea, says a study in this week's *British Medical Journal*.

The drama of emergency resuscitation is a favourite feature of the hospital soap opera. Researchers who set through hours of programmes to find out whether they were giving an accurate impression of the chances of survival found there were 18 cardiac arrests in 26 episodes of *ER*'s *Casualty*, five in eleven episodes of *Granada's Medics* and perhaps not surprisingly 26 in 27 episodes of World Productions' *Cardiac Arrest*. — *Sarah Bosseley*



Long-lost fish in Tamar

A RARE fish has been caught in the River Tamar 121 years after it was last recorded in Cornwall. A fisherman reported catching the 54lb allis shad, a relative of the herring, after the Environment Agency employed a student to circulate a description of the missing fish.

The allis shad, and another even rarer cousin the twaite shad, might have been in Cornish rivers in small numbers all the time but went unrecognised. — *Paul Brown*

Scientists find lost satellite

SCIENTISTS last night confirmed that they had finally "captured" the missing satellite Soho, lost for months more than a million miles away in space. The joint US-European solar and heliospheric observatory Soho, launched in 1995, went spinning out of control in June after a series of technical accidents. It had been at a point where the pull of the Earth and Sun were equal and had begun to revolutionise human understanding of the nearest star.

For months, researchers feared they had lost one of the most valuable observatories put into space. But by continuously "yagging" it from Earth, space engineers managed to turn the satellite back towards the Sun, enabling its solar panels to begin collecting energy to fire up its computers. Last night, the European Space Agency announced it was back in control. — *Tim Radford*

Degree starts to study aliens

BRITAIN'S first undergraduate course on UFOs and aliens will open next week at Glamorgan University's school of applied science when 50 students start a BSc module in extra-terrestrial studies. Mark Brake, a lecturer in the astronomy department, said the time was ripe for rigorous academic study of the alien issue. Topics on the course will include interstellar travel, the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence and an introductory guide on how to deal with an alien if you meet one. The *Life in the Universe* module will be one of 15 available in astronomy and students have to pass 30 modules to get a degree. — *John Carroll*

Couples test sex drug for TV show

Viewers complain of trial that 'trivialises serious condition', writes Janine Gibson

IT produced a television scoop yesterday when its daytime TV hosts Richard and Judy carried out a live test of Viagra.

But the stunt is being investigated by the Independent Television Commission after seven viewers complained of the inappropriate timing and tone of the experiment.

This Morning's hosts, Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan, gave three middle-aged couples a pill and sent them to a hotel. They later returned to report whether the drug worked.

Ann Craig, director of the Impotence Association, called the experiment tacky and said it trivialised impotence. "It makes the whole issue seem like fun when it is certainly isn't."

A spokesman for the drug's manufacturer, Pfizer, also suggested the programme had gone too far. "This type of approach trivialises a serious medical condition that causes

great distress to sufferers and their partners."

The three couples had been selected from volunteers after interviews and medical tests with This Morning's resident GP.

Only one couple, Derek and Annette Brown, declared Viagra a life-changing success after four years of impotence. Mr Brown, aged 50, said: "As we got out of the car at the hotel I felt myself getting flushed; it started in the lobby."

Alec Witherington, 52 and his wife, Anna, 49, said Viagra was the best impotence remedy they had tried but would be better used in the

privacy of their home. Peter and Norma Gowdie, 63 and 59, felt the experiment had not been a success because of the pressure. Mrs Gowdie said: "We kept checking our watches."

The couples were given a pill to take home and use at the weekend. They will give telephone reports to the programme on Monday.

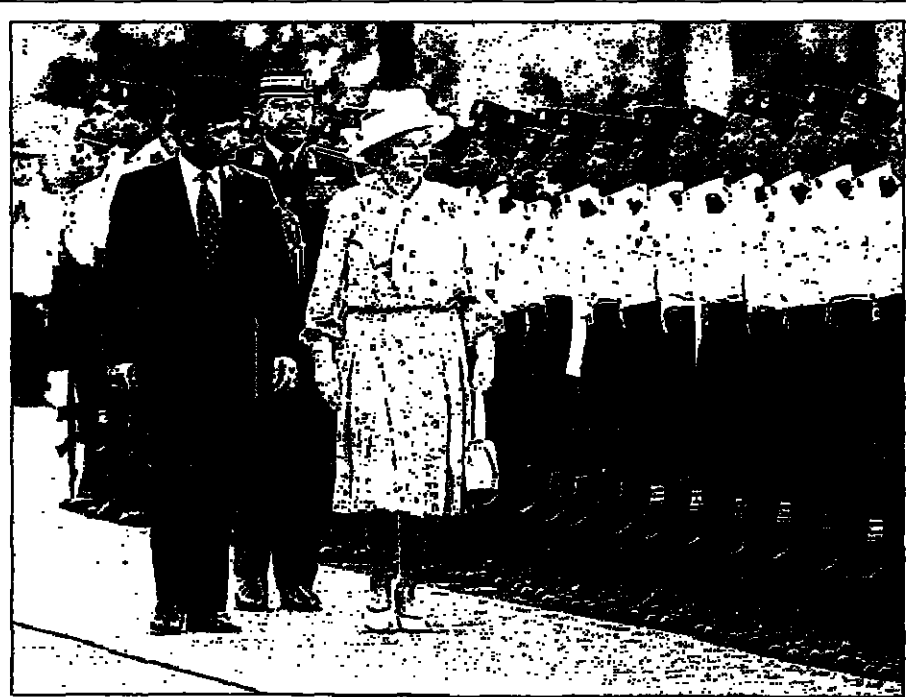
This Morning's editor, Nick Bullen, denied that the programme sensationalised the drug. "The topic is of great interest to our viewers. There has been much hype surrounding the drug. We wanted to test its effects ourselves."

Queen sips tea with Sultan as image men get in a spin

Nick Hopkins in Darussalam

IT HAD been billed as an opportunity for the Queen to rid herself of a stuffy image and become more accessible. Yesterday, however, she had to content herself with popping in on the world's richest king, the Sultan of Brunei.

At the start of a three-day royal visit, the Queen and the Sultan greeted each



The Queen and the Sultan inspect the guard at the beginning of the three-day royal visit, which has already been eventful

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBIN NUNN

other with a limp hand-shake — it is considered bad manners in Brunei to use a firm grip. They later adjourned to Audience Rooms Number One. There, perched on thrones, they did what old friends do everywhere: settled down to a nice cup of tea.

Even before she had landed, the spin doctors were chastising reporters for stories they considered off message. Four hired by the Sultan — from the Brit-

ish consultancy firm, Bell Pottinger — ticked off journalists for running scurrilous stories about the Sultan's brother, Prince Jefri. The prince is in exile after squandering a fortune working for a government building firm, and being dragged into a scandal about a harem of sex-slaves being flown from America. Reports of a rift between the Sultan and his brother, though, were untrue, said the chief spin-man.

The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, offered a personal insight into how the trip was going for him and his wife, Gaynor, making her debut on the international circuit. He admitted that Mrs Cook, his former secretary, had been "quite daunted" by the prospect of a state trip, but it was an exaggeration to say she had brought a whole new wardrobe. She had bought a new hat, he said — "a gorgeous hat for a gorgeous lady."

Warning of worsening crime figures as economy falters

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

THE Home Office is braced for a rise in the official crime rate for the first time in five years as the economy slows down.

Government criminologists warned of the crime rise yesterday as official research was published showing that sentences given by the courts are significantly tougher than the public assumes, with record numbers being sent to prison for longer periods.

Christopher Nuttall, director of research, development and statistics at the Home Office, said: "The current economic forecasts are imprecise, but if the economy starts to cool off this will have some impact on recorded crime rates."

Government research shows that when growth of personal consumption slows,

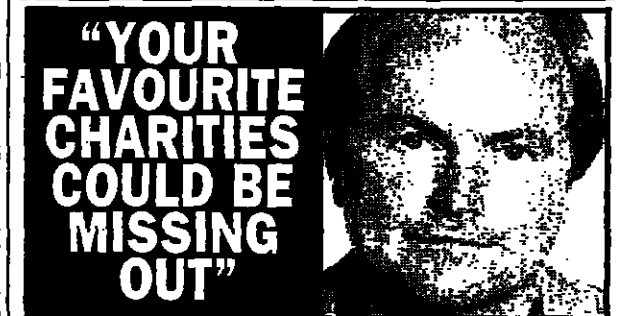
property crimes such as theft and burglary tend to rise, while growth in violent crime tends to slow down.

The 1997 figures published yesterday show that crown courts convicted 76,000 defendants last year, an 8 per cent increase. Some 60 per cent of these were sent to prison. In 1992 the crown court imprisonment rate was 44 per cent.

The average length of sentence, 22 months and two weeks, reached a 40-year high last year and was a fortnight longer than in 1996.

But Mr Nuttall said the imprisonment rate appeared to have peaked and had been falling slowly this year in response to reports of overcrowded jails.

The figures also show a continuing decline in the proportion of defendants being let off with a police caution, in the face of official discouragement of repeat cautions, and in magistrates' use of fines.



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The day Hollywood came to Hatfield

Stuart Millar on how Spielberg's filming of *Private Ryan* affected a community

A CORNER of Hertfordshire, summer 1997. Shells reduce what is left of the ravaged village to rubble, the air full of smoke and explosions. The narrow streets just outside Hatfield are littered with the human debris of battle as a heavily outnumbered band of American GIs stage a desperate last stand to stop a column of German Tiger tanks reaching the stone bridge and crossing the river.

A few hundred yards away, residents peer through the security fences for a glimpse of the unfold-

ing drama. They are unconcerned by the machine gun fire, unmoved by the gory horror of the carnage. No wonder: if they are lucky they may even see Tom Hanks in action.

A year on, the site of the epic clash is tranquil again. But for six months last year, it underwent a transformation as Steven Spielberg brought Hollywood to Hatfield.

Rather than blow an actual French community apart for the final scene of his acclaimed war movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, Spielberg built his own village in the middle of a disused

British Aerospace airfield on the edge of the town. Even the river was a fake.

"The movie is very impressive," said Paul Widdicombe, the deputy town clerk. "You would never tell that it was filmed just outside Hatfield."

In the space of a few weeks, the director and his set designers turned the flat expanse of grass into a shelled-out wasteland.

They excavated a large ditch and filled it with water to create the river. Dozens of ruined buildings were put up, including a bomb-damaged church and half-timbered homes. Two

bridges were constructed, one a mangled railway bridge, the other the stone bridge Hanks and his co-stars had to defend.

Then, with flags up around the site to prevent old ladies from keeling over with the shock of the explosions, they proceeded to blow it all up.

"We could hear the machine guns and the explosions even though it was at the other end of the airfield," said Ron Johnson, one of the security guards. "They reckon there was 3,500 people working here, including all the extras. One day Tom Cruise

came in in his Mercedes. I think he was putting Tom Hanks up at his house near here."

The benefits of the movie being filmed in the town were not confined to the opportunities for star-spotting. Despite the nuisance of having a bloody second world war battle noisily recreated a few hundred yards from their front doors, local businesses, from bakeries to petrol stations, welcomed the film-makers with open arms.

Hatfield DIY, across the dual carriageway from the airfield, made around £800

a month from Spielberg's production company for timber used on the sets. "We miss them actually," said Liz Potter, the co-owner. "They were very good customers."

Mrs Potter was one of 300 locals invited to a special champagne reception and screening of the film last week before its official release. She was impressed, but spent much of the film worrying about the guests of honour, 24 local war veterans. "I really felt for them sitting there watching that. I thought they were going to have heart attacks," she said.

Child abuse checklist divines risk in rubbish

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

PEOPLE who leave rubbish piled outside their homes, or over-react to missing a bus, could be marked down as potential dangers to their children on a checklist for social workers launched today.

Parents could also come under the spotlight if they have a chequered employment history or have ever appeared frightening to child welfare staff, according to the schedule which is meant to "ring alarm bells".

The checklist has been devised by The Bridge, a child care consultancy responsible for inquiry reports on some of the worst cases of child abuse within families, including the West killings in Gloucester and the death of Rikki Neave in Cambridgeshire.

The agency says the idea is not a definitive guide to people who pose a threat, but a tool to be used as part of a broader assessment process. However, it is already proving controversial.

Bruce Clark, director of central children's services for the NSPCC, said the checklist seemed a throwback to practices before the current trend, supported by the Government, of a less confrontational approach to families in need.

It also missed the point that many families in which children were killed were not known to the authorities. "For every Rikki Neave, there are numerous other incidents where children are severely injured, or die, where there has been no contact with the welfare authorities," he said.

Although Britain's record is relatively good, at least 100 children die each year as a result of abuse or neglect within the family. The Bridge, which has been involved in more than 30 inquiries into, or reviews of, the handling of such cases, has found that information about the families involved is rarely collated in a form enabling

easy assessment. The consultancy says there is "clear evidence that the danger may have been averted had one agency taken responsibility for collating alerting information".

The checklist is intended to ensure that "key indicators of dangerous care" are noted and considered fully.

Trials of the checklist have taken place in Kent, Berkshire, South Tyne, Hull and Harrow in north London, and it is being tested in Greece, Germany and the Netherlands.

Social workers are expected to use the schedule to assess families which are already causing concern. Families are given one of four ratings on 34 questions about the context, the parents or carers and the child or children involved.

As well as issues of drug or alcohol abuse, or any history of mental problems, there are questions about the family's levels of stress and social support — defined as access to practical help with such as baby-sitting or buying milk.

Social workers are asked to rate the level of any concern about cleanliness or repair of the family home. The checklist states: "In cases where children have died from neglect, frequent complaints had often been made by others about the state of the family's home, e.g. uncleaned rubbish."

The checklist, being launched nationally at a conference today in London, also asks whether the parents or carers have ever been reluctant to co-operate with professionals, have ever complained that a child was "difficult", or have overreacted to stressful events such as a child's tantrum or missing a bus.

Renuka Jayarajah Dent, deputy chief executive of The Bridge, admitted that some parents innocent of abuse or neglect might score highly on a few of the questions. But she said people would have to raise concerns across a broad range of the issues to trigger a finding of potential dangerousness. "The important thing to stress is that this is only a decision aid," she said.



The battlefield in Hertfordshire, above, and the director Steven Spielberg with Tom Hanks MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: TOM SMITH

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Touring Portillo apologises for for his role in Tory 'shipwreck'

'The party was the most successful in history because we appealed to people's aspirations and common sense. Now it is shipwrecked and I was on the bridge'

Michael Portillo (right)



Michael White
Political Editor

MICHAEL Portillo will apologise to voters this weekend for his part in "shipwrecking" the Conservative Party by making the electorate think it was sleazy, divided and uncaring, so that millions of them voted Labour instead.

modern fashion he has made a three-part TV series which will go out on Channel 4 on Sunday nights up to the conference on October 6-8.

party leader, for being too young and inexperienced. "The Conservative Party was once the most successful political party in history because we appealed to people's aspirations and common sense. Now it is shipwrecked, and I was on the bridge when it happened," he says in a further stage in his make-over as a caring One Nation Tory and admirer of Disraeli.

shire moor. The former minister, who lost his Enfield seat in Labour's landslide, is generally thought to accept that he has no choice but to be loyal to his new leader. "He sincerely believes that," one Tory insider said last night.

Industry Secretary, who thanks the Tories for the help they gave Labour in the election. Mr Portillo tells his guest that they are both politicians with an image problem because they are "strong personalities with strong views, who are not cowards, who are risk-takers".

... with increasingly declining intellectual conviction". Mr Portillo's continuing ambition is evident in his choice of party heroes. Apart from his old Cambridge tutor, Maurice Cowling, who criticises the Tories for expanding government, he cites Edmund Burke, champion of community.



Alarm avoided air collision

Rory Carroll

A JUMBO jet flew within 1,000 yards of an executive jet over Essex after a series of pilot and air-traffic control blunders set them on collision course at 500mph. Alarm systems sounded, allowing the pilot of the Gulfstream to swerve from the Japan Airlines Boeing 747, carrying 288 passengers and crew.

knots, forcing him to fly almost level for a period. The pilot failed to tell controllers he was unable to descend and controllers failed to monitor him. They cleared the Gulfstream, carrying two crew and three passengers from Sardinia to Luton, to cross the jumbo's path before checking the flight level was clear. The jumbo was en route from Kansai, Japan, to Heathrow.

Polluted Don in the clear

Martin Wainwright

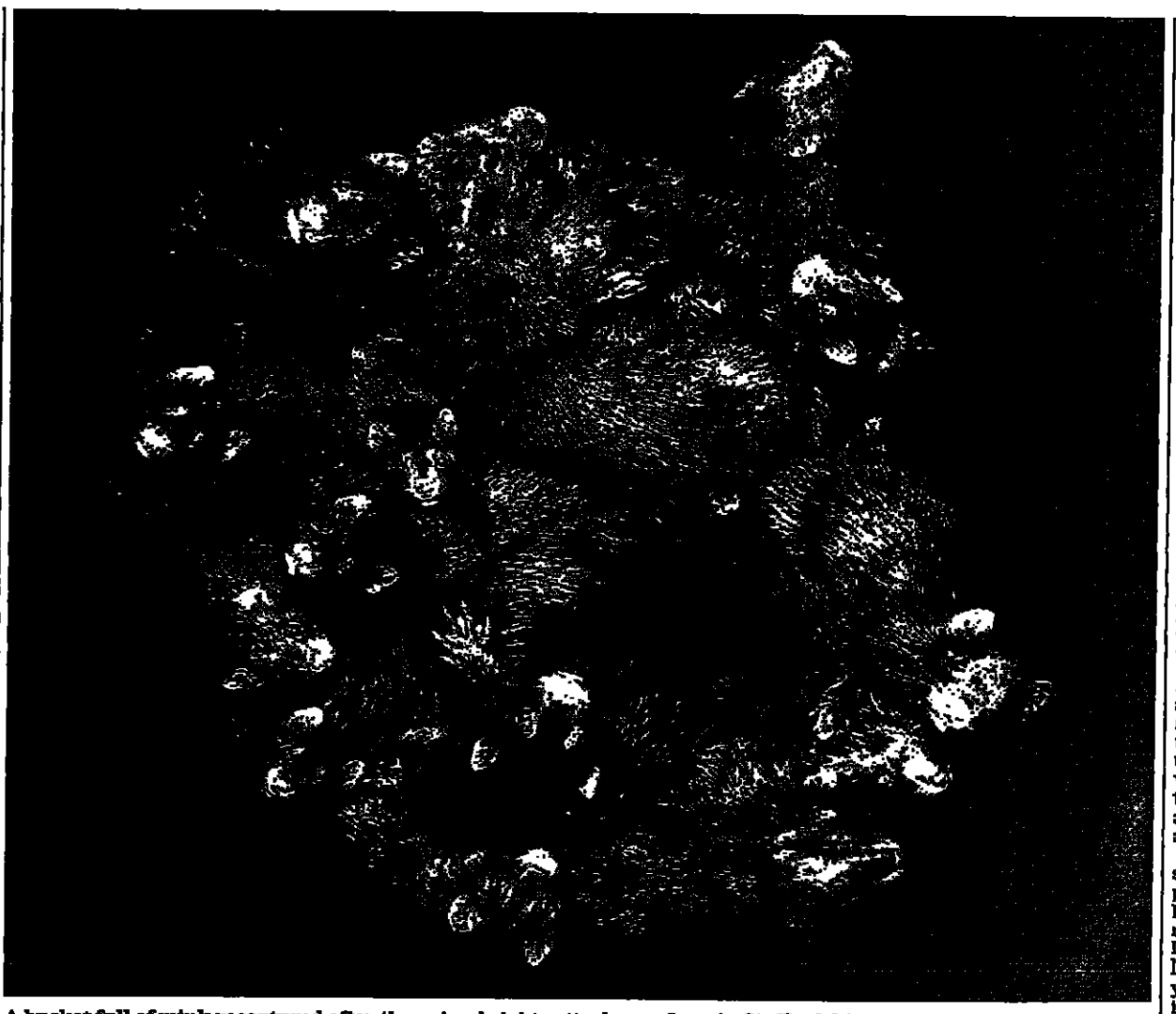
ABRIGHT orange river which runs for six lifeless miles past Barnsley in South Yorkshire is set to become the model for cleaning up Europe's former mining areas.

in itself, but the amount lying on the river bed, built up since the mine closed and pumping stopped, compounds the problem because it means there is nothing for river life to eat.

Mr Morris added: "Results from this pilot should show the most efficient ways of dealing with the treatment of polluted mine water, as well as testing the recycling possibilities of filtering out the iron. Some of it will be sold for brick-making. But we are going to try out the iron debris as a water-treatment flocculator — catching smaller pollutants and then sinking to the bottom because of the weight."

Both the Portillo analysis is implicitly much harder on John Major's failings as a leader than it is on Baroness Thatcher, whom Major loyalists blame for many of the problems he inherited in 1990. She remains Mr Portillo's heroine — frequently mentioned rarely criticised.

He is seen interviewing Peter Mandelson, Trade and



A bucket full of mink recaptured after the animal rights attack on a farm in Staffordshire

PHOTOGRAPHS: MIKE SHARP

Activists free 8,000 mink

Farmers shooting predators with 2,000 still at large in 'catastrophe' for local wildlife

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

MORE than 2,000 mink were roaming the Staffordshire countryside last night after 8,000 were released at a fur farm by animal rights activists yesterday — the second such attack in six weeks.

Sheila Keeling, from the nearby animal sanctuary Newhouse farm, said she discovered three cats mauled by mink. "All I could see were thousands and thousands of mink pouring out on to the road. It was the amount that was so frightening."

Both the farmer and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) blamed the Labour government. The ALF, which also claimed responsibility for releasing thousands of mink into the New Forest in Hampshire on August 8, said in a statement to a Liverpool news agency: "This action gives the

mink a fighting chance of survival rather than a miserable existence ending in death by gas or electrocution."

Car pound risk for the uninsured

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

MORE than 400,000 people convicted each year of driving without insurance and of other serious motoring crimes will have their cars impounded and possibly even crushed, the Home Secretary proposes.

"The rest of us have to pay for these people through extra premiums," said Mr Straw. "It is a lack of respect."

He believes much tougher penalties should apply to motoring offences involving a degree of prior intent by the driver, including drink driving and the more serious bad driving offences.

His proposals follow pressure from insurance companies and magistrates. The crackdown will mean much wider use of powers to deal with car tax dodgers. So far only 7,000 cars with no tax disc have been wheelclamped under a national scheme introduced 18 months ago.

Commission seeks role for reformed Lords

Michael White
Political Editor

WILLIAM Hague's unofficial commission on Lords reform got off to a shaky start yesterday when its chairman suggested that the voting rights of hereditary peers should not be taken away until after the next election.

Labour's historic enemy, the hereditary "backwoods" peers. Ministerial suspicion of the commission began when Labour obtained a leaked memo written by Lord Cranborne in June. It spoke of keeping its work "tightly in hand" and of appointing several figures with reliable Conservative connections to run it.

But yesterday the commission, which insists it is independent of the Conservative Party, stepped into a political minefield when its chairman, Lord Mackay, Lord Chancellor in the Thatcher-Major years, suggested postponing implementation of the bill to end hereditary voting. The bill will be the centrepiece of the Government's legislative programme in November.

the powers and composition of a revised Lords, which Lord Hurd said, should probably be only partly elected so as not to threaten the supremacy of the Commons.

8 WORLD NEWS

Sweden and Germany are days away from national elections where the competition for the female vote is hot. Guardian writers report

Schröder and the women

Ian Traynor in Bonn

ON THE market squares of countless small towns across Germany, young conservatives are sporting T-shirts mocking the inconstancies and infidelities of Gerhard Schröder, the four times married Social Democrat leader, who is bidding fair to be the country's next chancellor.

The message is simple and direct, and yet surprising for a culture which, unlike in the United States or Britain, treats the private lives of its politicians discreetly and deferentially. "Three women can't be wrong," reads the slogan on the posters and T-

shirts of the Christian Democrats (CDU), trying to make the point that Mr Schröder's failed marriages prove he is unfit to run Germany.

Younger, better dressed and more charming than Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Mr Schröder — the spin doctors and campaign strategists calculate — is more appealing to the 52.5 per cent of German voters who are women.

The failed-husband message is a controversial attempt by the Kohl camp to cancel this perceived attractiveness to the female electorate. But the tactic does not seem to be working.

"A slogan like that has an impact on women who are voting Christian Democrat anyway, but there is no evi-

dence it will sway undecided women voters," said Horst Becker of the Polis society for political and social research in Munich. "Schröder's four marriages are not an issue. The CDU is trying to make it an issue. But for women, who make up more than half the German electorate, marriage is not a big factor," he said.

"Kohl is used up," said Christina Sax, a Bavarian student who votes conservative but prefers Mr Schröder to Mr Kohl. "I don't like Schröder very much, but he wouldn't be a catastrophe. Better than Kohl."

For Regina Roth, aged 40, a housewife, German women could not care less that Mr Schröder divorced his third wife, Hiltrud, and last year

married Doris Koepp, a journalist almost 20 years his junior. Mrs Roth neither likes nor trusts Mr Schröder, but will vote for the Social Democrats a week on Sunday because they are promising her, among other things, an extra £10 a month child benefit.

Despite the CDU wooing of the women's vote through negative campaigning, there is no doubt that Mr Schröder is more popular than Mr Kohl for both sexes. An Infratest Dimap survey at the beginning of the month gave the challenger a 23-point lead over Chancellor Kohl among women voters. Were the German chancellor elected directly, 51 per cent of women said they would opt for Mr Schröder, against 26 per cent

who preferred Mr Kohl. And while 55 per cent had a positive opinion of Mr Schröder, 36 per cent were unimpressed.

On issues relating to women, the differences in the two big parties' manifestoes are more to do with nuance and language than policy — and leading pollsters and analysts say that age and education are, in any case, stronger determinants of voting patterns than one's sex.

The CDU programme speaks of "marriage as the best basis for raising children." The platform of Mr Schröder's Social Democrats (SPD) fails to mention the word "marriage" and is more explicit in supporting working women and amending the

tax system in favour of individual rather than family taxation.

With more than 4 million Germans jobless, it is the women, especially in the depressed east, who are suffering disproportionately. A study this month found that 1.5 million female jobs had been lost since unification in the east, where 92 per cent of women worked under communism.

When Mr Schröder won re-election in March as prime minister of Lower Saxony, he promptly sacked two women ministers and abolished the ministry for family affairs. Neither those moves nor his four marriages seem to have dented his popularity among Germany's 81.8 million women voters.

Welfare mother 'Gudrun the Red' seeks to halt Blairite drift

Martin Walker in Stockholm

GUDRUN SCHYMAN, the ardently leftwing feminist who could hold the balance of power in Sweden after next Sunday's elections, is a single mother and reformed alcoholic who believes the state should give every woman a rape alarm.

A tabloid newspaper yesterday accused Ms Schyman, aged 50, of employing underpaid "black" labour to clean her home. The cleaner turns out to be a teenage friend of her daughter; the two girls cleaned one another's flats for pocket money.

"I suppose it shows some people are worried about our rising share of the vote," Ms Schyman said yesterday, after polls predicted her Left Party (formerly the Communists) could take up to 15 per cent of the vote, triple what it got in the last election.

"I'm the only political leader in Sweden who doesn't want to be Tony Blair," she said to explain



'I'm the only political leader in Sweden who doesn't want to be Tony Blair,' says Gudrun Schyman of Sweden's Left Party. PHOTOGRAPH BY HANS TODD/REUTERS

her party's rise. "I think Blair and our own Social Democrats (SDF) have gone too far to the right, and ordinary people don't like it. I hope that this return to socialism will take place in Britain, too."

Tall, slim and armed with a wicked wit, she is an effective campaigner who has continued the transformation of what was once the Communist Party into a broad coalition rooted in the women's movement and among public employees.

On the lapel of her red jacket she wears a Swedish kroner with a hole, symbolising Swedish women's pay

that is 20 per cent lower than that of men. One of her main policies is to hold down male wages until women's pay catches up.

She expects to join the SDF in a coalition government after the elections — but unlike them, Ms Schyman wants to take Sweden out of the European Union, create another 100,000 public sector jobs by the end of the year, and establish a six-hour working day. She also wants to cut taxes on small businesses, such as the restaurant she runs.

The Social Democrats are not so sure about a coalition with "Gudrun the Red."

The SDF prime minister, Goran Persson, says the two parties' economic policies are "light-years apart". He would oppose her plan for an anti-European coalition of MPs to block the enactment of EU directives into Swedish law.

She needs only 88 MPs — 25 per cent of the Riksdag — to derail Sweden's EU membership.

"The EU is part of the unfair international order — its purpose is to strengthen western European capital against competitors in Japan, the US and the Third World," she said. "We must prevent Sweden joining the

single currency, as a first step to withdrawing from the EU altogether."

European Monetary Union "forces on European countries a liberal economic policy which increases unemployment and leads to welfare cutbacks."

Ms Schyman entered politics in the 1970s, campaigning for environmental and peace issues while raising two children alone on welfare and with irregular jobs as a social worker. Her experience of poverty and belief in the welfare state have made her popular after years of welfare cuts.

She has been granted a degree of public forgiveness by President Bill Clinton would envy. After getting very drunk at a film premiere last year, she caused a scandal. "I never thought I'd live to see one of our leaders literally piss on the carpets of the bourgeoisie," one supporter said.

"I have been forgiven by Swedes, because they know I had a sickness — alcoholism," she said yesterday. "I didn't lie about it and I cured myself, and I have had support from everyone."

"I don't know that I would forgive Bill Clinton, however. If he were my man I'd have left him long ago."

Vengeance by Hamas feared

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

PALESTINIAN teenagers who shot dead and wounded another yesterday when Jewish settlers opened fire in the West Bank, fuelling tension over the continuing border closure and plans to build more houses in the occupied territories.

The killing raises the prospect of a backlash as Hamas, the militant Islamist group has again vowed to carry out attacks on Israeli targets. President Clinton's Middle East envoy Dennis Ross looks set to fly home today, having failed to broker an agreement over a further withdrawal from the West Bank.

Iyad Rawhi Karabseh, aged 17, died on an operating table at Ramallah hospital. Palestinian witnesses said the boy was in a group of youths shot at by settlers as they left a school in the village of Belunyah, near Ramallah.

The witnesses said the settlers, shooting from a car, had opened fire without provocation. But an Israeli police

spokeswoman said liaison officers were checking reports that a settler had been attacked by stone-throwing youths. In the past, Israelis driving in the West Bank have opened fire to repulse Palestinian stone throwers.

The witnesses said about 10 high school students were walking along the main road when they were hit by a car. One of the students who escaped injury.

Passengers in the Ford rolled down their windows and began firing with a pistol and a sub-machine gun, said Raed Abdel Rahman, aged 17, one of the students who escaped injury.

"Everybody started to jump and take cover," he said. The wounded were taken to Ramallah Hospital. Iyad Karabseh died from a stomach wound an hour later, said the hospital director, Shaouk Harb. Fifteen-year-old Issa Mahmoud Jabareen was in a stable condition, also with a stomach wound.

The Palestinian planning minister, Nabil Shaath, said he believed the shooting was



Israeli police officers wait yesterday for rioting demonstrators camping near the controversial Har Homa settlement to pack up and leave the area on their own.

carried out by Jewish settlers who he said had a long record of violence against Palestinians. The Israeli government was not meeting its responsibility to rein in the settlers and was "allowing settlers to continue this violence," Mr Shaath said.

The shootings in the West Bank came as a closure, preventing Palestinians from entering Israel, continued. The closure was imposed after Is-

raeli forces shot dead two senior Hamas members last week, creating fears that the Islamist militant group will carry out a revenge attack.

Meanwhile, it emerged that the Israeli government has approved the tenfold expansion of a Jewish West Bank settlement where two settlers were killed by Palestinian militants last month.

Under the plan, 600 new housing units are to be built

in the Yitzhar settlement near the Palestinian town of Nablus, according to David Bar-Ilan, senior aide to the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. There was a big demand for housing from new settlers who want to move into Yitzhar. Mr Bar-Ilan said. But according to Israeli peace activists monitoring settlement construction, half of the 138 housing units in Yitzhar stand empty.

Indians 'were sterilised for votes' in Brazil

Alex Bellos in Rio de Janeiro

DOZENS of women from a tribe of Brazilian Indians have been sterilised by a doctor in exchange for their votes in Brazil's last election, prompting fears about the survival of the tribe, according to a Sao Paulo newspaper.

At least 83 women of the Patuxó Hã-hã tribe in the northern coastal state of Bahia are reported to have been sterilised four years ago by a doctor who is standing again in federal elections next month. The revelations in the daily paper O Globo threaten to create a storm.

It is common practice in poor areas of Brazil for election candidates to buy voters with gifts. Women are often offered sterilisation as an effective method of birth control.

According to the newspaper, the Indian women agreed to the operations. But aid agencies believe they were acting against their best interests and putting their civilisation in jeopardy. "They don't have a perspec-

tive on the future. They do this kind of thing without understanding the real consequences. What is at play here isn't the individual, it is the whole community," Roberto Liebgott, co-secretary of the Missionary Council for Indigenous Affairs, said.

According to O Globo, the women were sterilised during the 1994 election by Roland Lavigne, a doctor who was standing as a federal deputy. Mr Lavigne, who denies the allegations, is trying for re-election on October 4.

The sterilisations are linked to the Indians' land disputes with local coffee and cacao plantation owners, who have ties to politicians.

"Politicians are doing this to kill off the nation," Alcides Francisco Filho, one of the Patuxó Hã-hã chiefs, told O Globo.

The 1,500-strong tribe live in poverty in six villages 70 miles inland from the coastal town of Ilheus. In the village of Bahetá there have been no births in four years because all 10 women of child-bearing age were sterilised.

A survey being carried out by the Indigenous Health Council has discovered 83 cases of sterilisation so far. It claims that the operations, in which the doctor makes a small incision to cut the Fallopian tubes, were conducted with minimum medical standards.

The allegations could become an embarrassment for the president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, because Dr Lavigne is a member of the ruling Liberal Front, whose support his coalition depends on.

The government department that is responsible for Indians, Funai, has said it is investigating the allegations and has barred politicians from entering Indian reservations until after the election. The Centre for Justice and International Law, in Washington, is preparing to submit a complaint against Brazil to the Organisation of American Nations. It is the most serious indigenous case the OAN has dealt with since Brazil was condemned by its human rights committee in 1985 for failing to protect the Yanomami Indians from disease and destruction brought by miners.

Couch-potato Americans emerge as droves of culture vultures

Survey results disprove redneck stereotype in US, Mark Tran writes from New York

THE United States is becoming a country of culture vultures, with more people than ever going to the theatre or opera, reading books and drinking wine and cappuccino, the National Endowment for the Arts said yesterday in a study on cultural trends.

The study goes against the stereotype of uncouth

rednecks wolfing down Big Macs in front of the television.

It finds that Americans are buying serious books in huge numbers and the percentage of people enjoying the performing arts is rising dramatically.

Even television viewers are tuning in to greater numbers to arts pro-

grammes or documentaries on the History Channel.

"The very fact that somebody like me can survive writing 900-page history books in an era when people are said to be not ready for anything beyond a sound bite, says something," said Taylor Branch, a historian on civil rights, said.

"The transformation from manufacturing to information- and service-based economy makes it harder for 'redneckism' to survive as a cultural doctrine, although some people do their best to keep it alive," he said.

The study notes a proliferation of theatre companies, orchestras and radio

stations broadcasting a blend of classical music and news.

Almost 27 million people attended theatrical shows during the 1997-1998 season — almost 60 per cent of them outside New York — raking in a record \$1.3 billion in ticket sales.

The number of professional theatre companies

has grown to more than 900, compared to fewer than 60 in 1965.

More than 110 American regional orchestras, including the Louisiana Philharmonic in New Orleans, have been founded since 1980.

Americans bought 430 million more books in 1996 than in 1982, when

1.7 billion volumes were sold. Magazines such as *Roll*, *Appetit* and the *New Yorker* are no longer confined to the east and west coasts. *Roll* *Appetit* sells nearly a third of its 1.1 million copies each month in the heartland and a quarter of the *New Yorker's* 810,000 circulation is absorbed by middle America.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Madrid must ditch doubts to keep door to peace ajar

Carmen Gurruchaga, who has covered Basque politics for the daily El Mundo for 20 years, found herself the victim of terrorism when a bomb went off outside her flat. The death threats drove her to Madrid, but the ceasefire has enabled her to return home to San Sebastián, where, she writes, many people are experiencing a new joy of not living with terror

It is almost impossible to describe the joy felt by most Basque citizens when they heard yesterday's announcement that ETA had declared an unconditional truce. The shopkeeper need no longer fear that his business will be vandalised or blown up because he has refused to back an ETA initiative; members of the security forces will not face the threat of death every waking day, and all those on ETA's hit list, used to living in a constant state of alert and fear, can leave their bodyguards behind and walk the streets freely.

That was exactly the thought that flew into my mind when I heard the news. It was a personal, almost selfish one; a sense of profound relief. "Now the threat hanging over me has gone." While the ceasefire holds, I can stroll through the old part of San Sebastián, an area I love which has been barred to me for more than two years because my safety couldn't be guaranteed.

At night in my home in San Sebastián I won't be awake wondering if another bomb is about to go off like the one the terrorists left outside my front door in December. For the

moment, peace of mind will return to my life and to those of many other people who found themselves in a similar situation.

It could, of course, all be part of a public relations ploy by ETA to clean up its image in the run-up to elections in the Basque country. But it is also a development that the main Basque nationalist parties have been trying to bring about, with a part of ETA — and its political wing, Herri Batasuna (HB, or Popular Unity) — for at least five years.

ETA's announcement has caught the People's Party government and the opposition Socialist Party on the hop. The ceasefire effectively sabotages the strategies they had carefully devised in the run-up to next month's Basque elections.

For a start, HB isn't presenting itself to voters as the party that has backed ETA violence for years. It has changed its name to Euzkadi Herriartek (EH, the Basques' Party) and will go before the voters as a party that backs a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party) and Euzko Alkartasuna, the two nationalist parties that have helped to bring about this breakthrough on the road to peace, and the two main state parties, which planned to make their stand against violence a key campaign theme, will all have to change their message to voters.

It is possible that EH could form part of a nationalist coalition government in the Basque country, something that would have been impossible with HB — a party inextricably linked to the use of violence. If that were to happen, the nationalist model for the Basque state could be built in practice — a model quite different from that proposed by the main Spanish parties.

A door towards peace has opened because, for the first time in its history, ETA has offered an indefinite truce, unilaterally. It will be hard for ETA to backtrack as long as the government is willing, at least, to keep that door ajar.



A youth passes an ETA banner hung illegally in a street in San Sebastián, capital of the Basque country, yesterday, on the day the separatist organisation declared its ceasefire. It reads: 'Continue with the fight' PHOTOGRAPH: AP/WIDEWORLD

Spanish PM calls for actions not just words

Adela Gooch in Madrid

SPAIN'S prime minister, José María Aznar, said yesterday he could not trust the ceasefire declared by the Basque ETA guerrilla group and called on the separatists to show their desire for peace with actions not just words.

"After 30 years of terrorist activity we cannot give the ETA organisation the benefit of the doubt," Mr Aznar said during a visit to Peru.

"If ETA really wants to put an end to its trail of death, it has to realise that any step toward credibility must be earned with actions and not declarations."

Other ministers responded cautiously but none rejected the move out of hand. "We cannot play with people's desire for peace," said the interior minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja, recognising widespread public hopes for a peace process to end 30 years of violence in the region.

He added that time would determine "the authenticity of ETA's decision".

The ceasefire announcement in a communiqué delivered to Basque newspapers yesterday clearly caught the government by surprise, with Mr Aznar on an official tour of Latin America.

The nationalist president of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol, whose votes support Mr Aznar's minority centre-right government in Madrid, urged the prime minister to seize an opportunity that could lead to a peace settlement.

"The challenge should be taken up even if there is a risk of deception," he said. "The ceasefire declaration came days after non-violent Basque nationalist parties called on ETA to follow the example of the IRA, whose ceasefire paved the way for talks in Northern Ireland."

Moderate Basque politicians described ETA's decision as a breakthrough which followed discussions in the summer held by Basque political parties on how to solve a

conflict that has led to more than 800 deaths.

"We are immensely satisfied, although there is a long path ahead to peace," Juan María Arzua, the security minister in the Basque regional government, said.

Basque optimism contrasted with the sober tone adopted by central government ministers. Leaders of the Socialist opposition took a similarly cautious line.

Mr Mayor Oreja, who earlier in the week warned that ETA might propose a "take truce" in the run up to elections due in the Basque country on October 25, rejected its call for radical reform of Spain's political structure. He insisted that any change in the degree of self-government enjoyed by Basques could take place only within the existing legal and constitutional framework.

The Socialist leader, Joaquín Almunia, echoed the government's caution, recalling a failed attempt by his party to negotiate with ETA when it was in power.

"We share the sense of hope now felt by many, but we are also concerned that this hope rests on a string that is not controlled by Spain's democratic parties. Our aim is lasting peace rather than a quick ceasefire," he said.

Political analysts said ETA's ceasefire was motivated, in part, by the Irish example, which had left it isolated as the only significant terrorist group operating in Europe. But they also said effective police action and judicial moves to cut off its funding had undermined ETA's operational capability.

They said the group would probably be willing to soften the harsh political position laid out in the ceasefire declaration, and that the issue of some 600 ETA prisoners held in jails around Spain would play a key part in any negotiation.

Since coming to power in 1996, Spain's centre-right government has concentrated on police action against ETA. It has maintained that only a prolonged, unconditional ceasefire and an agreement to lay down arms could pave the way for talks.

David Sharrock, page 12
Leader comment, page 13

Truce calls for Basque state

IN ITS ceasefire declaration, ETA agrees to stop killing but makes no political concessions, writes Adela Gooch in Madrid.

The group stresses Basques' right to self-determination and its own aim of achieving a totally independent Basque state.

The open-ended ceasefire is the first not to set a time limit. (There have been six other truce offers during ETA's 30-year history of violent attacks but only three were implemented.)

The declaration does not mention laying down arms — a condition the Spanish government has always considered necessary for talks to begin. Instead, ETA reserves the right to "maintain its structures and support groups" and to defend itself if attacked.



Madridites read Spanish newspapers announcing ETA's truce PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREA COMAS

The statement denounces the existing distribution of power between the regions and central government in Madrid. It says the democratic system set up in 1978, after the death of General Franco, which granted regions a strong measure of devolution, has broken down.

The communiqué calls for the creation of a new

Basque state, to include the three Spanish Basque provinces, as well as the neighbouring Spanish region of Navarre and the French Basque region.

It urges Basque nationalist parties to break with the "subjugating instincts of France and Spain", denouncing the parties for having co-operated with the two countries in the

past. It says the Basque country must have totally new political institutions.

ETA makes the continuation of the ceasefire conditional on progress towards achieving these aims. "We hope to receive a response as magnanimous as the step taken. Future events will determine, from this moment on, whether the ceasefire becomes permanent."

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Old pals' act – for now

It may not be the passionate affair it once was, but Labour's relationship with the unions is proving a lot more lovey-dovey than predicted. Fraternity in Blackpool this week will not, however, stop both government and unions facing up to critical questions about the balance of power in Britain's work places, says **Seumas Milne**.

SO FEROCIOUSLY did New Labour's spin machine distance the party from the trade unions in the run-up to last year's general election that the reality of the relationship in Government has come as something of a surprise. It is not simply the procession of Cabinet ministers who came to pay their respects at this week's Trades Union Congress (TUC) conference in Blackpool or the unprecedentedly chummy remarks made by Tony Blair. More striking still has been the extent to which ministers have been prepared publicly to engage with the TUC's arguments and criticisms of their policy. For all the week's headlines about Government "warnings" and "rebuffs" to TUC pressure for a change of economic direction, there was a palpable sense in Blackpool that after two decades of unrelenting Government and employer hostility, the trade union movement is finally returning to the mainstream of public life.

The white paper *Fairness at Work*, which offers a legal right to union recognition, is for all its weaknesses widely seen as offering the best

opportunity for a generation for re-building trades unionism from the bottom-up. But whether forthcoming legislation ends up creating the conditions for a major unionisation drive in the new emerging industries and workforces or ends up a damp squib depends crucially on details. Employers' organisations are lobbying furiously for revisions in their favour. The decision lies with the same Peter Mandelson (Trade and Industry Secretary) who yesterday tempted the TUC with his offer of "opposition or legitimate influence".

Of course, this is all a long way from the 1970s and it would be wrong to exaggerate the unions' genuine, but modest, influence on government. The trade unions' role is a strictly subaltern one in the current climate. Business has far greater clout in New Labour's most powerful circles and private corporate donors have been getting a great deal more bang for their bucks than the trade unions. It is businessmen such as Lords Sainsbury and Simon who have the jobs in government. The TUC is quietly satisfied with its "colonisation" of Whitehall but it does not

begin to match the presence of company executives on scores of official review and advisory bodies. The minimum wage at £3.60 per hour is far below the level the unions would like to see and the Government's maintenance of the bulk of the Conservative anti-union laws – some in violation of International Labour Organisation conventions, to which Britain is a signatory – scarcely betokens the capitulation to trade unions newspapers like the *Daily Mail* are already beginning to detect.

A parallel point can be made about the wider position of trade unionism. Just as the power wielded by unions under the last Labour government was, and continues to be, exaggerated, so current trade union weakness is also often overstated.

It goes without saying that union muscle and influence is nothing like what it was twenty years ago: TUC membership has been cut by almost half from 12 to 6.7 million, as the bastions of traditional union strength – such as the docks, mining, steel and shipbuilding – have been swept away or transformed by new technology. The growth of difficult-to-organise smaller

workplaces and new forms of employment has compounded the problem. It is a pattern that has been matched to varying degrees in large parts of the rest of the world in the 1990s and 1990s. The most recent ILO figures show falling union membership over the past decade in all but 20 out of 92 countries surveyed, under the impact of neo-liberal policies, political change and intensified global competition. But the growth of trade unionism or upsurges in militancy in countries as varied as South Africa, South Korea, France, Brazil and the United States has tended to dampen down speculation that this overall decline might, End of History-style, prefigure the eventual disappearance of trade unionism altogether.

In Britain, the TUC remains by far the largest voluntary or membership organisation in the country. Its affiliates have a presence on the ground in every significant industry – with tens of thousands of shop stewards and 200,000 safety representatives – and recognition agreements with 44 out of Britain's top 50 companies.

The new determination to promote an independent political agenda was made clear by this year's TUC president, John Edmonds, in his much-reported "greedy bastards" speech. While it was his attack on boardroom greed that attracted most of the attention, the main focus of

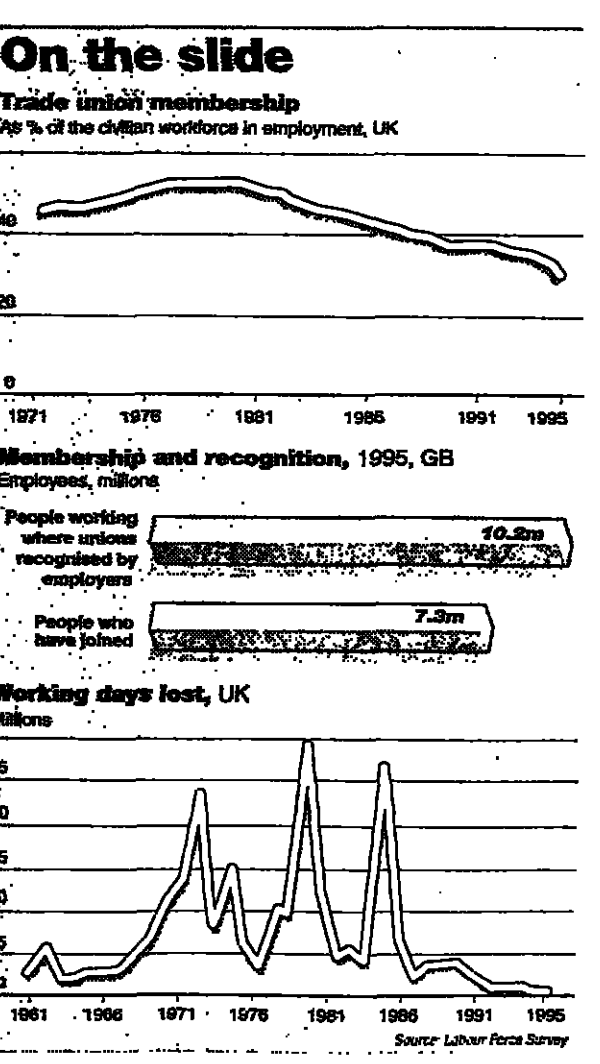
the speech was a more wide-ranging critique of the "rightwing time-war" in which he argued much government policy was caught whether towards inflation and unemployment, interest rates, welfare reform, the Public Finance Initiative, public sector pay, taxation or union legislation. With Labour MPs quiescent, events may well begin to push the unions into a position where they are the only force able to exert any significant pressure on the Government from the left. It would be remarkable in those circumstances if ministers were not anxious to improve relations and tie the TUC in more closely.

But to exert that potential influence, the trade union movement will need to work harder to reverse its decline. Overall TUC membership is still falling, albeit marginally, despite the fact that the number of jobs has been growing and unemployment falling for several years – and that trend is about to go into reverse. As the new Trade and Industry Secretary reminded the TUC conference, only 18 per cent of workers under 30 are members of unions and trade union density is lowest in the fastest growing sectors of the economy.

John Monks's answer is to promote "social partnership" with employers and Government – he wants to see a national "dialogue" with employers and ministers on pay and wider economic policy. Partnership deals – usu-

ally trading flexibility for job security – are now all the rage and human resource managers in some parts of industry are adjusting to a less confrontational industrial relations climate. Some trade unionists, however, complain that partnership can be a cover for old-fashioned "sweetheart" deals and that, unless they deliver better pay and conditions to union members, it will backfire. Recruitment campaigns could also end up creating difficulties for the TUC leadership. The more successful they are, the more likely it is that accumulated grievances in the targeted workforces may spill over into industrial action. The current strike level in Britain remains extremely low – lower even than in the Tories' final years – but it has not escaped the notice of many trade unionists that those with industrial muscle who have taken action, such as the postal and rail workers, have done well out of it. With the squeeze on public pay expected to produce some sort of industrial reaction the risks of a collision between the partnership and recruitment sides of the TUC's "New Unionism" equation seem set to grow.

Graphics sources: Office of National Statistics; Trades Union Congress website; <http://www.tuc.org>; Graphics: Paddy Allen; Seumas Milne is the Guardian's labour editor.



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Comment

TEFAL
Diary
Matthew Norman

EVER loyal to Downing Street and eager to follow the lead set by Mr Tony Blair, the Diary notes the vogue for commercial sponsorship at the Blackpool Conference — the “dog leads” on which hacks must hang their passes carry the name, you will recall, of the supermarket Sainsbury’s — and is swift to jump on the bandwagon. So we ring the electrical goods firm Tefal, and promise a good honest plug in return for a kettle. “I might think about that,” said the firm’s senior product manager. “Yes, I think we could do that. Call our PR people.” There, Victoria Hunt asks how many kettles we wanted. “Just the one.” “The Eclipse is a nice one in stainless steel. It’s doing very well. When would the story be going in?” When we get the kettle. “We’ll put it in the post today.” Later, Victoria rings back. “I’ve read the column,” she says. “What do you want the kettle for?” To make tea. A little later, she calls once again. After some discussion in the office, Victoria informs us, Tefal has downgraded us from the downgraded Eclipse (£69.99) to the Vitessé (£37.99).

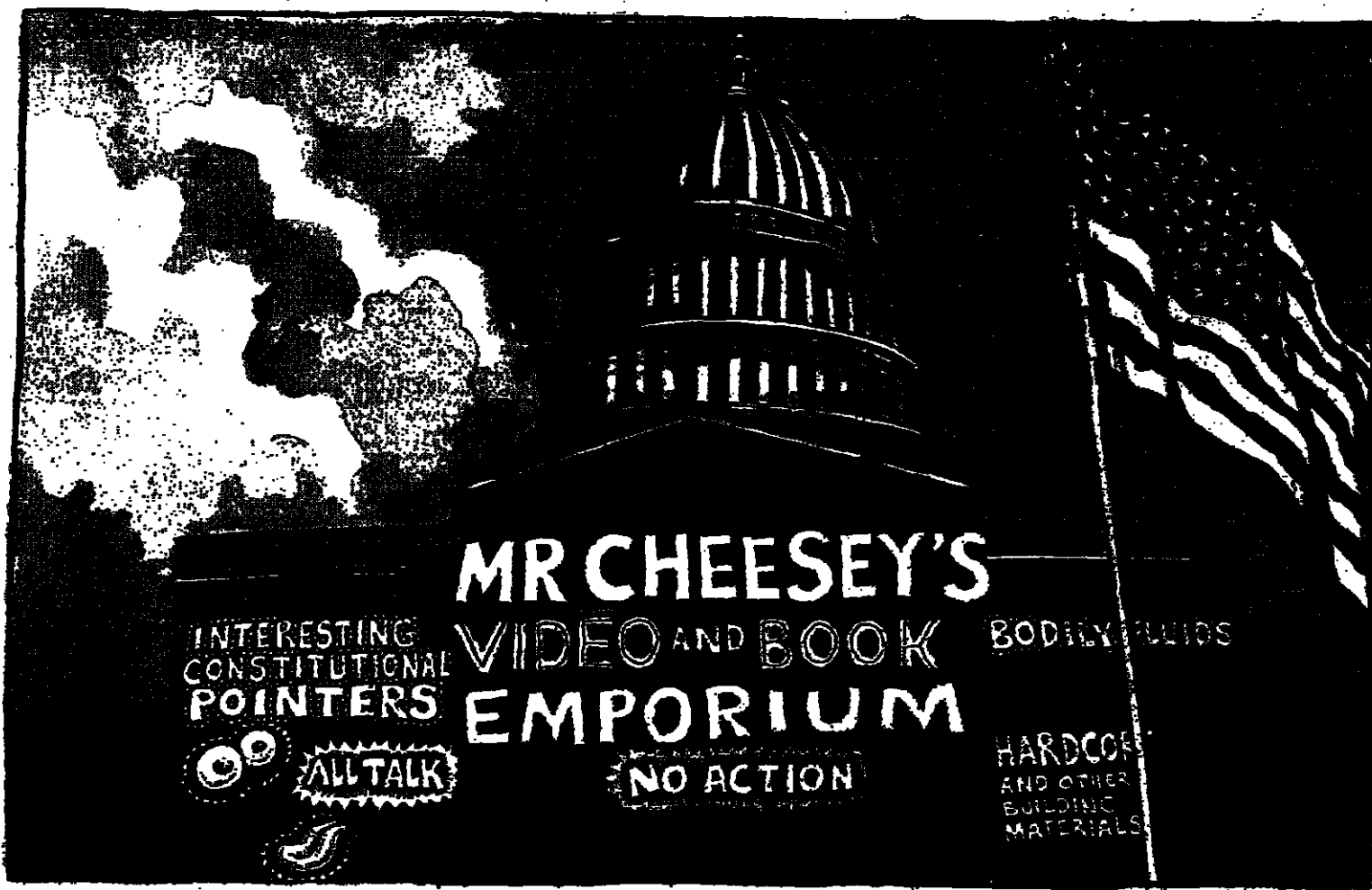
WHEN we ring Downing Street to ask if they have ever been downgraded, and if so how they cope, the conversation is in high-level talk. “I’ll get someone to call you back,” says a press officer. “Ah, and will that be today?” Click. brrrrrr. The rumours that Debbert’s New Guide to St. Quette and Modern Manners has made a late bid to sponsor a late-night talk on the Bell’s Conference blower remain unconfirmed.

ANYONE interested in following Tefal as official sponsor should make an approach in the usual manner. We are currently in high-level talks with Macallan, distiller of that most excellent malt whisky, but there may well be a berth towards the end of next week.

FOLLOWING the popular reception for the Star reporter’s footnote 210 (anal-oral), today’s featured footnote is 81. The main text relates that Monica’s aunt Debra Finerman testified that her niece described to her “a particular sexual encounter with the President, 81.” And so to that footnote. “81,” she testified that the encounter concluded with the president masturbating into a bathroom sink. Not only charming, but so hygienic as well.

WHAT, people invariably wonder, is the secret of the wealthy businessman’s success? In the case of my friend Lord Holic, owner of the Express, the answer is simple: attention to detail. There is nothing, however small, that takes place in his media empire about which that delightful peer is ignorant. He even takes a close interest in the development of young journalists, as one new graduate trainee discovered when she approached him to introduce herself at an Express party. Isn’t the training scheme fantastic, enthused His Lordship. It really is the most tremendous success. I mean, look at all the brilliant people who are coming through... people like our film critic Jason Solomons. He’s doing so tremendously well. “I hate to mention this,” Lord Holic said, “but you fired Jason Solomons this week.”

ANYONE contemplating the purchase of a new kettle could do a lot worse than Tefal’s new Vitessé. Displaying a unique combination of design excellence and a full range of features, the Vitessé comes in two attractive colour combinations (white with lilac touches, and — like ours — a soft apricot with splashes of terracotta), and being cordless is remarkably easy to use. With a thermoplastic body, cool touch handle and hinged locking lid, it has been designed with complete safety in mind. The Vitessé from Tefal... your kitchen will ask you how it ever managed without it.



The washing-machine salesmen of the Third Way are very modern

Decca Aitkenhead


ALL me old-fashioned, but I would always rather have something that worked than something that didn't. I would prefer, for example, a washing machine that cleaned my clothes, to one that made them dirty. But I have just discovered that this does not make me old-fashioned at all. On the contrary, this makes me very modern. As of Monday, you might examine my washing machine preferences and infer that I am a follower of the new Third Way.

On Monday, Tony Blair will be in the US for a Third Way seminar with Bill Clinton, and to mark the occasion is publishing his own Third Way pamphlet, which Alastair Campbell is presently busy looking to Sunday journalists. With him will be Anthony Giddens, whose own book about the Third Way comes out today. Professor Giddens sits in on all these Third Way seminars, and will have more than a passing hand in Blair's pamphlet. He is described as the Prime Minister's guru-in-chief, so anyone trying to find out what Blair wants to do with Britain would do well to read his book. Blair, for example, is apparently dying to read it. In an early speech on the Third Way, Blair declared, “What counts is what works,” and this has been the guiding philosophy of New Labour to date. Pragmatism has been fetishised, ideology demonised. As is the way of politics, however, Blair has come to wish for an ideology to call his own, and so has turned to intellectuals for some ideas. This is normal enough, though it is interesting that others such as Clinton consult gurus for the nuts and bolts of policy. Number 10 is sorted for nuts and bolts —

it's just not yet sure what sort of machine they add up to. Critics have mocked New Labour for its lack of an intellectual vision, so it would hardly be fair now to mock Blair's efforts to come up with one. Giddens's book is subtitled *The Remaking of Social Democracy*, and this is an estimable project. The book lays out a convincing, if familiar, case for why the centre-left must rethink its strategy, and offers some interesting suggestions.

The world, Giddens states somewhat unnecessarily, “has changed fundamentally.” Social democracy can no longer rely on its old assumptions — that economies are contained within national boundaries, that people vote as a class bloc, that political activity exists only within the parliamentary system. Solidarity has been replaced by a new individualism, the traditional family is disappearing, identities grow ever more fluid and hybrid. The Government still has great power, but economic and cultural globalisation is “a reality.” Giddens then presents a series of issues for which the old left and right ideologies have no answers. What good is Marxist analysis to pollution or BSE? What can old-style conservatism, with its faith in nationhood, do about nuclear energy? What help are they to worries about global warming? “None of these,” he concludes, “is a clear left/right issue.”

In other words, politics these days is much more complicated than who owns the means of production. This is manifestly true. But Giddens's solution is to stop thinking about that old stuff, and come up instead with slogans like “No rights without responsibilities,” and “No authority without democracy.” These are perfectly good notions, and clearly preferable to rights and authority without responsibilities or democracy. From these lead a host of policy ideas — experiments with direct democracy, local community initiatives to tackle poverty, public-private partnerships, and so on. The proper role of the modern state is to encourage us to take out private pensions, be more entrepreneurial, take more risks, and learn new skills so that when we lose one job, we can go out and get another one. We can no longer expect the state to protect us from the risks of capitalism, but to help us look after ourselves and profit from capitalism. Everyone's on the same side — business, government and individuals — working in partnership for prosperity. In short, everyone's a winner.

In principle, this is a splendid plan, but there is something missing from it, and it is suggestive of the political truth which sometimes seems to be missing from Tony Blair's imagination. Politics is ultimately about competing interests. Everyone cannot be a winner — the tobacco and health lobbies, for example, cannot both win — and there will always be losers. The biggest job of government is to broker compromise, to find one interest against another, and argue the case. To believe otherwise is to be fundamentally afraid of politics. In truth, the Third Way is not so different, only it prefers not to say so. You get to the end of the book, and see this new civic partnership requires the poor to get a job, go back to college, clean up

their estate, run Neighbourhood Watch, and so on. But what was it big business had to do, again? You look back through, and find that business must be rewarded with generous tax breaks for participating in new Third Way initiatives. There is talk of preventing the very rich from excluding themselves from civil life, but really nothing on how this might be done.

When Giddens and Blair talk about “what works”, they primarily mean “what works for business”, which is not the same thing. When this becomes clear, and people realise they cannot all be winners, there is a danger that they will feel somewhat let down, as though they have been sold a washing machine by a man who swore blind it would wash and dry their clothes at the very same time! Some issues do indeed transcend old left and right assumptions, but the entirety of politics does not yet do so. Globalisation, a “fact of life” on which so much of Third Way thinking is based, is not a natural law but an act of right-wing political will: the international financial markets could be controlled if the left chose to act.

If “what works” worked for everybody, and left and right no longer meant anything, the Third Way would be the Only Way. As it is, it is an interesting beginning. Those who dismiss it as Thatcherism with a kind face are quite wrong, and there is lots to welcome in it. But Giddens himself has the grace to quote a philosopher, who observed: “When I am asked whether the division between left and right still has meaning, the first thought that comes to my mind is that the person who asks the question is not on the left.”

These sneering leftists standing for the NEC are Blair's enemies

The selfish parasites

Neil Kinnock

MANY Labour Party members, supporters and voters regard the Guardian as their paper. What it says about the Party can matter. So for the Guardian to urge its readers to support Liz Davies and her allies in the forthcoming National Executive elections is, to say the least, bizarre. Its coverage has given the impression that the Labour Left Briefing slate is somehow a voice of ordinary party members against the “bureaucrats of Millbank.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. Labour Left Briefing insiders are the remnants of the divisive groupings that defamed Labour and helped to keep the Party out of power throughout the 1980s.

They don't engage in constructive criticism. In every debate they use more abuse than argument. Their politics wears a perpetual sneer. And as an ultra-left clique who are in constant war with the Party leadership — whoever is leader — they are certainly not representative of Labour's rank and file.

They fought against every change as the majority of our Party worked to revive our fortunes, to reconnect with reality, and to put us back in touch with the voters that the Party wants to serve. They opposed the expulsion of the Militant Board and others in the organisation. They resisted every advance of one-member-one-vote. They demanded that every word of Clause Four was retained and treated the great majority that voted for change with contempt. They would always prefer to fight a battle in the Party than put their energies into combating Labour's opponents.

MAYBE I wouldn't mind so much if Liz Davies and her friends came clean and said “we are proud of what we did and we would do it all again.” Obviously they would not win my vote, although they might gain a little respect. But they haven't even got the courage to say where they stood and where they stand now. It isn't because they have changed or because they are embarrassed. They are just hoping that some people in the Party have forgotten and others simply don't know.

For Liz Davies to stand as “centre-left” is laughable. Her group — Labour Left Briefing — has nothing but scorn for democratic socialists or “centre-leftists”, or anyone who doesn't share their sour sectarianism.

So because they know that the broad mainstream Labour Party members would never elect her to the Executive, they have rebranded themselves as the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance. And, to borrow some respectability, they have pulled in others who haven't got the ultra-left background and affiliations. Those people should know better. Indeed, they probably do — but they've been willing to be used in the hope that being on the slate will help their chances.

Mark Seddon is, unfortunately, a case in point. Tribune, the paper that he edits, has spent its 60 years being awkward, irreverent, sharply critical of several Labour leaders, including me. But Tribune has rarely been exploited by sectarians of the far left. On the contrary, Tribune editors and Tribunitians have fought them as democratic socialists should. It never implied slavish admiration for the Labour leadership. But it always implied a willingness to be duped.

I have already voted in the NEC election. As usual, I used the slates to guide, not to determine my vote — and I have voted for those whom I believe will genuinely represent the views of members. I have not voted for anyone who I think will be afraid to press genuine concerns about policies and directions, even if it means criticism. But no one who would use a position on the National Executive to wage war against the Labour leadership has got my vote.

And none of the thousands

Liz Davies' group scorn anyone not sharing in their sour sectarianism

of people who worked for years to get a Labour Government should be willing to vote for an automatic opposition faction on the NEC either. As we cast our votes as individual Party members, all of us — Guardian leader writers, Tribune editors, democratic socialists and those who are authentically from the centre-left — should reflect on the fact that Trotskyists, sectarians and other selfish parasites have always abused the generosity of people in the Party in their efforts to advance.

Jose Rodó, the democratic socialist, wrote: “The country that forgets its past is doomed to relive it.” It is true of a Party, too. I hope there is no forgetfulness, no gullibility. They have cost our Party so much before. They mustn't again.

Neil Kinnock was leader of the Labour Party, 1983-82

The Basque separatist terrorists have called a ceasefire. It's got a good deal to do with their links with the IRA

Influential Adams

David Sharrock

THE Omagh bombing, the worst single act of violence in the modern Irish troubles, will forever have a special significance for Spain, but not simply because two of its citizens — an eleven-year-old boy from Madrid and his teacher — were killed in the blast last month. It was the moment when the Basque terrorist group ETA demonstrated just how involved it is with Sinn Féin and the Irish peace process. When Gerry Adams, for the first time in decades of ambivalent responses to violence, condemned the bombing, it was only a few hours before Herri Batasuna, ETA's political wing, followed suit. No matter that ETA was still ostensibly killing Spanish citizens in the name of Basque indepen-

dence while Sinn Féin had already signed up to a political settlement — one that would not deliver the united Ireland for which Adams and the Provisional IRA had fought since 1970. While the Basque and Northern Irish conflicts differ, there is enough common ground for ETA and the IRA to believe they are fighting a “brother struggle”. ETA, which has killed some 600 people over 30 years, attracted wide support while its campaign was directed against the Franco, but once the transition to democracy gave regions the possibility of autonomy, the ETA campaign seemed irrelevant to most Basques. Just as John Hume's SDLP — still the majority nationalist voice in Northern Ireland — believes in the right to aspire to a united Ireland but does not necessarily want to fulfil that aspiration, so too do

moderate Basques, represented by the Nationalist Party (PNV), cherish the idea of an independent Euzkadi “somewhere”. ETA and Herri Batasuna value their long-standing links to Sinn Féin and the IRA (a representative was inside Sinn Féin's offices at Stormont in the final hours of negotiations which led to the Good Friday Agreement) but the PNV has a strong opinion on the real dynamic that delivered peace in Northern Ireland and is determined to use the same template.

“Hume-Adams” was the key. Hume persuaded a war-weary Adams that violence was leading republicans away from their goal and that a “pan-nationalist front” could shatter Ulster's political permafrost. The PNV has been playing catch-up this last year, speaking clandestinely at first with Herri Batasuna,

then breaking cover and finally signing a Hume-Adams-style declaration of principles last weekend.

THE message that, like the IRA, ETA now wants to join the real world should not be misread by the government of José María Aznar. Yet that danger is clearly manifest in the, as yet, faltering response from Madrid. Aznar's combative interior minister Jaime Oreja has presided over a crushing period for ETA/Herri Batasuna, destroying four terrorist cells and attacking its financial infrastructure, closing its newspaper and venturing in an interview that “we should not be afraid of declaring B3 illegal”.

Major Oreja's actions have been popular, even within the Basque country where revulsion towards ETA's latest murder spree

runs high. All the indications are that the minister was planning an even harsher response to ETA after the Basque regional elections next month, but he has been wrong-footed by the ceasefire. The PNV, which has been urging the government for months to be ready for an unexpected truce, is right when it asserts that public opinion cannot be ignored.

Most Basques and Spaniards want dialogue and “the Irish model” peace process — release of prisoners, referendums on a new constitutional dispensation. The prime minister's office appears to understand that: Aznar's chief of staff Javier Zarzalejos minutely followed the Northern Ireland process while at Spain's London embassy.

In recent months Aznar has twice talked of “taking another step” and of “constitutional imagination” regarding the Basque country. He must not now be pushed into believing that ETA has only called a ceasefire out of weakness and therefore a “military” victory is the shortest route to peace and normality. Aznar admires Tony Blair, but he should remember John Major, the man who started the peace process ball rolling. Mr Aznar enjoys the support of the Basque nationalists. He should take their advice, pick up the ETA ceasefire ball and run with it.



مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Auguste Gillot

In service to the Party

AUGUSTE Gillot, who has died aged 93, served the French Communist Party (PCF) for more than half a century and played an important role at crucial moments in its history. Loyal, trustworthy and courageous, he was the sort of communist whom historians and commentators forget.

Born in Dourdan, in what used to be the department of Seine-et-Oise, he began working in the coach-building trade. After military service, in 1925 he joined the PCF, which was then proclaiming itself to be a revolutionary workers' party based around factory cells. Between 1924 and 1928, in the Paris region, the membership grew from 6,000 to nearly 13,000, with Seine-et-Oise providing a third of the new members.

Gillot soon distinguished himself by his enthusiasm

and ability to work within the political machine. He became a PCF full-timer, visited the Soviet Union from 1931 to 1933, and then became one of the PCF directors in the southern region of Paris.

He became well-known in 1934 when the PCF deputy for Saint-Denis, the future fascist and collaborator Jacques Doriot, was expelled. Gillot was in charge of the opposition to him, which involved complicated manoeuvres — and considerable violence. He showed his conciliatory side by endeavouring to arrange negotiations between communists and socialists to settle the *affaire Doriot*, but these were doomed since neither Doriot, the PCF leader Maurice Thorez, nor the official socialists really wanted negotiations. Gillot showed considerable courage since he was targeted by Doriot's strong-arm men, prevented from attending

meetings and howled down when he spoke. When an associate came to assist, an attempt was made to knife him.

Illness prevented Gillot standing as a candidate for the 1936 general election, which brought the Popular Front briefly to power. However he was elected to the Saint-Denis municipal council in 1937.

Demobilised after France's defeat in 1940, Gillot was one of the PCF members who immediately took to resistance. More preoccupied with defeating the Germans than with establishing political priorities — a characteristic of the Parisian resistance, in contrast to the resistance in non-occupied France — he had many adventures, narrowly escaping capture by the Gestapo in 1941. In 1943 he was chosen to represent the PCF, replacing André Merclier — who was sent to Al-

giers — on the Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR) created by Jean Moulin, under orders from General de Gaulle.

On the CNR, Gillot insisted to the socialists that the Resistance should neither be made into, nor presented as, a purely working-class movement. It would then be regarded with hostility by those who were anti-communist, and would be weakened accordingly. He was also determined to prepare a Paris uprising, claiming to be following de Gaulle's principle. There would be no liberation without insurrection.

Thus was Gillot prominent in organising the strikes and demonstrations that preceded the Paris rising on August 19, 1944. He was violently opposed to the "truce" that was agreed with the German authorities immediately afterwards, and denouncing

those who had arranged it as "traitors" and "cowards", succeeded in getting an official order for insurrection accepted on August 21. Five days later he was one of those who marched down the Champs Élysées with de Gaulle.

After the war Gillot believed that his duty lay in Saint-Denis. Elected mayor — by acclamation — in April 1945, he retained this office until he stood down in 1971. Determined that his town should remain *Saint Denis Ville Rouge*, he was responsible for its rebuilding and renovation. As a PCF central committee member until 1964, and a member of the Conseil Général de la Seine, he represented the PCF's urban base.

Douglas Johnson

Auguste Gillot, communist activist, born February 5, 1905; died August 31, 1998



Gillot... working enthusiastically inside the communist political machine in France

Catherine Turney

Tough words for women

IN THE 1940s, when the Hollywood studios catered to the massive audience of women separated from their men at war, stars like Joan Crawford, Barbara Stanwyck, Ida Lupino and Bette Davis filled roles as career women, battling to survive alone in throbbing melodramas. Providing these strong women with strong material was the screenwriter Catherine Turney, who has died aged 91.

She wrote most of her screenplays for Warner Bros, who had the most powerful female stars under contract and produced the best "women's pictures". Perhaps the most archetypal was *Mildred Pierce* (1945), starring Joan Crawford in the title role. Turney wrote this adaptation from James M Cain's novel a year before it was finally made, by which time Ronald MacDonnell had taken over as screenwriter. But much of Turney's original script was retained. The publicity line for the movie was "Don't tell what

Mildred Pierce did." What she did was leave her first husband, become a waitress, work her way up to being a club-footed restaurant owner with the help of a millionaire, for whose murder she is blamed. The murderer turns out to be her spoilt-brat daughter Veda (Ann Blythe), for whom her mother is willing to take the rap. As Crawford explains to her best friend (Eve Arden) at the end of the film: "You don't know what it's like being a mother as I do. Veda's part of me. Maybe she didn't turn out as well as I had hoped she would. But she's still my daughter and I can't forget that."

My Reputation (1946), for which Turney got sole writing credit, was written for another "sacred monster" of the screen, Barbara Stanwyck. She plays a widow who devotes her time to her two young sons and domineering mother, until falling for the wrong bloke (George Brent). Turney followed this with

the second movie version of Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1946), with club-footed Paul Henreid observed by Eleanor Parker's brashly insensitive waitress. However, the script needed Leslie Howard and Bette Davis, who played in the 1934 movie, to make it work. Fortunately, Turney had Bette Davis to bring life to her screenplay of *A Stolen Life* (1946), the highly implausible tale of twin sisters (Davis times two), one good and one bad. When the good one is killed, the bad one takes on her identity.

A few more examples of high-class, enjoyable tosh followed: Ida Lupino as a seentall nightclub singer involved with a mobster in *The Man I Love* (1946); Barbara Stanwyck physically threatened by Errol Flynn in *Cry Wolf* (1947); and Bette Davis as a repressed spinster unhappily falling for a man who wants to become a Catholic priest in *Winter Meeting* (1948).

Turney told an interviewer in 1984: "At Warner Bros, women writers were not particularly highly thought of. We were seen as a necessary evil and were seldom paid as much as the men. I think the only reason they put up with women writers was that they had big women stars... and demanded stories slanted toward women."

As the 1950s dawned, a new

school of acting and actors began to replace the likes of Stanwyck, Crawford and Davis, and more realistic screenplays were in demand. Turney's last woman's weepie was written for Stanwyck at Paramount. It was called *No Man Of Her Own* (1950) and concerned an unmarried, pregnant woman caught in a train wreck, who pretends to be the widow of one of the corpses. The fact that audiences swallowed it is a tribute to both the screenwriter and star.

Turney scripted only two more features — *Japanese War Bride* (1952), an interesting study of the problems of GIs returning to the US with oriental wives, and the uncharacteristic *Back From The Dead* (1957), in which a wife is possessed by the spirit of her husband's first wife.

Catherine Turney, who continued to write soap operas for television and romantic novels, had "no man of her own", having never married or had children. Perhaps this explains the passion with which she imbued her women characters, most of whom made the wrong choices in men. As Eve Arden says in *Mildred Pierce*: "I never yet met a man who didn't have the instincts of a heel."

Ronald Berman

Catherine Turney, screenwriter, born December 26, 1906; died September 9, 1998

John Denmark

The sound of silence

THE psychiatrist John Denmark, who has died aged 74, was convinced that deaf children were being inappropriately educated using speech and oral/aural methods. In articles and lectures he explained how young deaf people could be prone to psychological and emotional problems because of the communication difficulties with their hearing parents and teachers.

His arguments led to change and he played a fundamental role in transforming the way deaf children are educated in Britain. His communication skills, together with his abilities as a clinical physician and psychiatrist, led to his pioneering work in deaf people in this country.

In 1964, Denmark established the first specialist psychiatric unit for deaf people at the Whittingham Hospital, Preston. From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, he was Brit-

ain's only consultant psychiatrist for deaf people. Now there are three such specialist units, in London, Manchester and Birmingham — the latter two named after him. From his position of authority, he was able to get sign language accepted as a language in its own right.

Denmark was born in Liverpool, the fourth of six children of the principal of a school for deaf children. During his early years, as he mixed and played with these children, he would often communicate with deaf people in the street using British Sign Language, causing amazement when he explained that he was not deaf himself. A keen sportsman, he captained the cricket and football teams at Liverpool Institute, where he studied modern languages.

In 1942 he volunteered for the Royal Navy. From 1945 until 1951 he read medicine at Liverpool University, where he developed an interest in neurology. However, shortly

after qualifying he was asked to fill an urgent vacancy in psychiatry — and thus began a long and distinguished career.

John was warm and humorous, and it was exhilarating to see him interact with deaf patients, many of whom regarded him as a close friend, even though he was held in awe. A prolific writer, his comprehensive text book,



Denmark... pioneering role

Deafness and Mental Health, was published by Jessica Kingsley in 1994.

Before — and after — retirement, he served on many committees, and advised many organisations, including the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, the North Regional Association for Deaf People, and Royal Schools for Deaf Children in Manchester. He was a founder member of the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness.

John will be greatly missed around the globe. His final moments were spent discussing the history of mental health services for deaf people, to which he was totally committed. He is survived by his wife, Frances, and their son and daughter.

Brendan Monteiro

John Clifford Denmark, psychiatrist, born February 15, 1924; died September 8, 1998

Fakhriyah Abdul-Karim

Breaking taboos in Iraq

IN THE mid-1930s, Al-Kut was a dusty little town on the Tigris River, 200 kilometres south of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. Life in the region — the birthplace of Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian civilisation — was still dominated by a feudalism with its own code of practice, its own laws. Acting, whether on stage or in the movies, was not regarded as a respectable occupation, most particularly for a woman.

It was into this environment that Fakhriyah Abdul-Karim, who has died of cancer aged 63, was born. The daughter of a traditional, conservative family, she was to become one of Iraq's most famous actresses, the star of the country's first film, the first Iraqi woman to act on the stage. She was to star in many plays and several films.

By the 1950s the aspiring Fakhriyah had joined the Iraqi Communist Party and assumed a stage name, Zeinab — partly to protect the dig-

nity of her family. That first Iraqi film was *Mr Saeed Afandi The Respectable*, the plot of which centred on a civil servant and his wife, played by Fakhriyah. With its appearance she became part of the new elite of theatre in Iraq — and continued her defiance of traditional and conservative life.

In July 1958 the western-backed Iraqi monarchy was toppled in Colonel Kassim's military coup. The ensuing two years of political turmoil reinforced Fakhriyah's radicalism.

ZEINAB had great success in the theatre in the 1950s and 1960s. She gave outstanding performances in such plays as *The Palm Tree* and *The Neighbours*, by a prominent leftist Iraqi writer, Ghaleb Tuma Farman, in which she played a bar, *The Mudhouse* and *O, My Son Shaker*.

In 1979 she was named best Iraqi actress following her

performance in *The House of Bernarda Alba*. But by then relations between the Iraqi Communist Party and the Iraqi government were deteriorating, and Fakhriyah's exile herself to the then communist-leaning South Yemen. She later moved to Syria before settling in Sweden in 1991 — where she was granted political asylum with her husband, the director Latif Saleh. Before she died she had been optimistic that she would again see Iraq.

The life of Fakhriyah Abdul-Karim was full of conflict and replete with ironies. She embraced a career that ran against everything in her family background. She once braced an ideology which contradicted the society and politics of her country. She survived by her husband.

Abdul-Hadi Jilad

Fakhriyah Abdul-Karim (Zeinab), actress, born 1935; died August 14, 1998

A Country Diary

NORTHERLAND: A walk in the uplands of the Allen valley and we enjoyed the welcome sight of several coveys of grouse. We took the labradors and kept them walking at heel, leaving the dachshund at home, much to her annoyance. It is as well that we did, or we would have enjoyed such marvellous contact with snipe. Munching sandwiches in the lee of a gully, we heard the unmistakable drumming of the species, surely one of nature's exciting sounds. The noise is caused by the snipe's outspread tail feathers when div-

ing, an odd, vibrating, beating sound. I understood this noise to be an accompaniment to a display of courtship. It was out of context on this occasion. I peered through heather to see the bird — it was a common snipe, not the smaller jack variety, legs half-submerged in a peaty pool, long bill pointed downwards poised for another plunge into the water. After several minutes the bird came out of the bog and began to feed with characteristic corkscrew movements of the long bill, pausing every few strides as it searched for a succulent mor-

sel. One of the dogs stood up, this alerted the wader, who sprang upwards in consternation and winged its zig-zag course away from us "seam" continuously in characteristic fashion as a warning to relations nearby. Sure enough, another snipe flushed from the marshy spot, besides a couple of thrushes. Coming down from the hill, a family party of long-tailed tits crossed the track in follow-my-leader style, graceful avian acrobats chattering continuously to one another with their sweet call.

VERONICA HEATH

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

ON PAGE 7, September 11, an article titled "Unleashed" was illustrated with a photograph of a dog, incorrectly identified as a "Labrador". The photograph was of a "Border Collie". The article also contained several other errors, which we apologise for. The article was written by "John G. Smith" and was published in the "Guardian" on September 11, 1998.

AN ARTICLE headed, "Street cred: page 8, Society, March 9, was illustrated with the rooftop shot from the title sequence of *Coronation Street*, which we captioned, "Clean slates: the terraced streets of Salford..." This sequence was filmed in Bolton (Astley Bridge looking towards Bolton town hall).

OF *Love is the Devil*, the film about Francis Bacon which stars Derek Jacobi. Apologies.

Letter

Ernest Goodman writes: The journalist Phil Tucker (*Obituary*, September 16) was even more talented than you suggest. He was also a fine teacher. Before he joined the Guardian permanently he taught art at the Manchester Secondary (later High School of Art, of which I was headmaster. He was much liked and respected for his easy competence and humour, and greatly missed when he left.

Peter Loft writes: Most of the films of Leonid Kinskey (*Obituary*, September 13) are on video, with the notable exception of *Duck Soup*, *Rhythm on the Range* and *Trouble in Paradise*. Unlike all the other Hollywood studios, Paramount Pictures has failed to put its golden age pictures on video. So films by Lubitsch, Billy Wilder, and Preston Sturges, with such stars as Bob Hope, Marlene Dietrich and Charles Laughton, languish unseen in the vaults.

Death Notices

PHILLIPS, David, Cury Hospital, 10 Sybil St, died after a determined fight to regain his health. Send your donations to The Samaritans.

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Drop in price of crude reduces value of planes-for-barrels defence contract with Saudi Arabia

Bae loses on oil payments

Terry Macalister

FALLING oil prices have seriously dented cash reserves at the United Kingdom's biggest manufacturing exporter, British Aerospace. Its Al-Yamama defence contract with Saudi Arabia is paid for in barrels of crude.

Depending on fluctuation, the decline in the price of oil means Bae could be receiving \$3 million a day less than it was a year ago. Its shares fell by 36p to 326p as investors took fright.

In a swift attempt to halt the erosion of confidence, chief executive John Weston promised the cash outflow would be temporary. He pointed out that Saudi Arabia had not defaulted on any instalments so far, adding: "There is absolutely nothing to worry about."

Net cash fell in the six months from \$761 million to \$513 million, despite an \$851 million boost from selling stakes in the communications companies Orange and Orion Network.

Much of the downturn stemmed from the falling value of the 600,000 barrels of oil per day handed over by Saudi Arabia in return for Tornado and Hawk aircraft,

under the terms of the Al-Yamama deal which is worth an estimated \$2 billion a year.

The issue of oil payments was the only cloud over Bae yesterday — it unveiled a 24 per cent leap in first-half profits on the back of a record order-book of \$23.8 billion.

The interim dividend was raised 20 per cent to 2.35p after the company's pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose to \$344 million, well above City expectations.

Bae said future trading

conditions looked good with major opportunities in its core areas of commercial aircraft, defence systems and support services.

The company was bullish about the jointly owned Airbus Industrie, rejecting suggestions that the major contract for new equipment from British Airways was not won at a profit.

Mr Weston admitted 15 aircraft had been cancelled because of the Asian crisis, but pointed out that this was in

the context of 230 Airbus being delivered this year.

He said some Airbus partners had been talking to US aircraft manufacturers about their possible involvement in the consortium.

Mr Weston said the future of both aerospace and defence lay in further European and then global co-operation but that the speed of overall defence consolidation would depend on the US Defense Department opening its doors to foreign participation.

The defence side takes an important step forward today when a production contract for the first batch of Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft is signed. Mr Weston said this would be worth more than \$1 billion.

Bae said a review was still being prepared on the future of its Royal Ordnance business. No closure, like the one mooted at Bishopclee, near Glasgow, would take place until the review was completed.

The company is also looking at bringing in foreign partners. The future of the troubled ammunition side of the business would depend partly on whether the Ministry of Defence remained committed to maintaining a UK capability.

Bae said it was still looking at disposing of its Arlington Securities business, but admitted the current state of the stock market made a flotation unlikely in the short term.

Telecom stocks dive on French connection

Jim Treanor

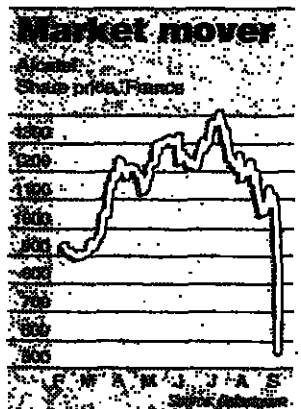
EUROPEAN telecommunications stocks plunged yesterday after Alcatel of France shocked investors with a profits warning which sent its shares down by 40 per cent at one point, the largest fall recorded by the Paris Bourse for a single stock.

The news from the leading French company which manufactures telecom equipment and supplies wiring, dented confidence among investors who have

been piling into similar stocks in the hope of achieving rapid returns in what was expected to be a fast-growing sector.

Its shares were suspended seven times before ending the day at 568 francs, down 38 per cent. Alcatel's problems affected the entire French market, which fell by 5 per cent.

Its rivals around Europe, such as Nokia, Ericsson and Philips, also felt the pain, falling by around 8 per cent. GEC, which fell rapidly in London, recovered some ground by the close to 424p, down 39p.



Some analysts believe, however, that investors may have taken fright too quickly in some stocks, such as GEC, which is focused in the UK where telecom deregulation is more advanced.

Alcatel warned that the Russian and Asian crises as well as falling demand from its traditional customers would "adversely impact" on its operating income. The company is receiving fewer orders from newly privatised telecom companies, such as Deutsche Telekom, which are facing increased compe-

tion in rapidly deregulating markets.

The severity of its statement raised concerns about the management of the company and awakened rumours that chairman Serge Tchuruk would resign. He has denied the claims.

"Alcatel anticipates that 1998 will not meet expectations in regards to the group's operating performance," the company said, even though it announced a 15 per cent rise in operating profits in the first half of 1998 to FF2.3 billion (about £250 million).

Growing Kwik-Fit tightens grip in Europe

Tom McGhie

CAR parts company Kwik-Fit yesterday consolidated its grip across the Channel by buying its Continental clone, Speedy Europe, for £105 million. The agreed bid for the Toronto-owned subsidiary of Speedy Mullers gives Kwik-Fit market domination in the tyre and exhaust replacement business in Europe.

The Speedy acquisition with its 588 outlets in France, Belgium, Germany and Spain now gives Kwik-Fit 700 garages on the Continent.

It also enables the rapidly expanding car parts group to exploit a new client base for its fast growing insurance business.

Chairman and chief executive Sir Tom Farmer intends to use Speedy as a base for further European acquisitions.

Yesterday's announcement was the icing on the cake of a set of better than expected interim results which left shares up 19.5p to 487.5p.

Earlier, Sir Tom unveiled a 31 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £33 million on a turnover up 5 per cent to £251.7 million. The second half could produce even better figures.

One of the best performing sectors in the group is the insurance business, set up three years ago.

There are now 500,000 Kwik-Fit policy holders, most of whom have been sold policies after a visit to a brake and exhaust centre.

Work in progress



STEVE Jobs, acting head of Apple, presents the new iMac computer at the Paris Apple Expo yesterday. Some US analysts are expecting

600,000 to be sold in the US alone by Christmas, which could push Apple back into the top five American computer manufacturers.

Early sales figures have yet to be released, but much depends on Christmas when most computers are sold, in a world market with

10,000 companies selling 80 million PCs annually. Apple's recovery task is still gargantuan. PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC CABANIS

Next pays price for the wrong sort of clothes

Roger Cowe

NEXT, the fashion chain, yesterday disclosed the financial damage of past buying errors when it reported a 30 per cent slump in profits. The announcement confirmed a warning last March that sales were suffering. That warning rocked Next's shares and dented the retailer's reputation.

The chain acknowledged that it had stocked too little formal women'swear in the spring ranges and not enough children'swear items.

Next managed a small increase in total sales against the first half of last year, at £536 million, but the rise came from shops opened in the second half of last year. Sales in comparable shops fell by 9 per cent and the extra cost of the new space drove down profits.

Both the retail chain and the Next Directory mail order business suffered. Sales barely rose in either operation, and profits fell by almost a third.

David Jones, the chief executive, said the buying mistakes occurred because of complacency and rapid growth after several successful years. He said they would not happen again because of training and review programmes and a changed senior management team.

Mr Jones said sales in the first six weeks of the second half were 12 per cent ahead of last year.

Analysts remained dubious about Next's prospects, however, and marked down the



shares by more than 8 per cent. Other clothing retailers, including Arcadia and Marks & Spencer, also saw their shares marked down by around 6 per cent.

John Lewis reported a 5 per cent drop in pre-tax profits for the first half of the year, before an exceptional gain from a VAT refund.

Chairman Sir Stuart Hampson said the drop followed two years of substantial increases but was "an uncomfortable reminder of how quickly profit can be whittled away when sales lose momentum."

Sales in the first weeks of the second half were lagging forecasts. It would be difficult to match last year's profits, he said.

© Morrisons, the northern supermarket chain, increased profit by 10 per cent in the first half of the year to £68 million, while profits at Geest, the fruit and vegetables company, were level at £12.8 million.

Sales show fall in growth rate

Mark Atkinson Economics Correspondent

HIGH Street sales remained solid in August despite rising job losses in industry, but the underlying trend points to a slowdown in economic growth, according to figures published yesterday.

Fears of inflation were fanned by a sharper than expected 0.4 per cent rise in retail sales volumes between July and August. But the Office for National Statistics said the recent run of data still pointed to a slowdown in the growth rate of high street sales. In the year to August, sales volumes were up by 2.9 per cent, compared to 3.1 per cent in July.

Overall, City analysts said the figures neither backed the case for lower interest rates nor blocked it. The Bank of England has signalled that it remains cautious about cutting rates while growth remains relatively robust. But the Monetary Policy Committee has indicated that it will act if the deteriorating international outlook intensifies deflationary pressures.

The increase in sales in August was driven entirely by food sales, which jumped 1.2 per cent after a weather-induced slump in July.

Non-food sales fell by 0.4 per cent. There were falls in household goods and textiles, clothing and footwear — areas which saw prices rebound after the summer sales.

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Australia 2.78	Germany 2.7006	Malaysia 6.38	Singapore 2.83
Austria 19.29	Greece 472.64	Malta 0.52	South Africa 10.03
Belgium 35.77	Hong Kong 12.87	Netherlands 3.0224	Spain 232.44
Canada 2.477	India 71.16	New Zealand 3.22	Sweden 12.82
Cyprus 0.81	Ireland 1.0826	Norway 12.29	Switzerland 2.26
Denmark 15.55	Israel 6.42	Portugal 220.61	Turkey 442.280
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News in brief

Daimler jobs fear

THE merger between the car manufacturers Daimler-Benz and Chrysler may result in the loss of 100,000 jobs — nearly one in four of the workforce — as the enlarged company seeks to increase profits, according to a critical shareholders' group led by Gerd Rathgeb, the works council chief at the German company's Unterturkheim operation.

Daimler's chairman, Jürgen Schumpert, has repeatedly promised that no jobs will go. Daimler's shareholders are due to vote on the deal today.

Leeds tactics praised

LEEDS Sporting Club, the owner of Leeds United football club, yesterday appointed Richard North, finance director of brewer and hotel company Bass, as a non-executive director. He joins Asda chief executive Allan Leighton, who was appointed last month.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale said BSkyB's takeover bid for Manchester United confirmed the company's strategy of building a sports, media and leisure group. The

new management team at Leeds was capable of implementing such a strategy, he said. The company reported pre-tax profit for the year to the end of June of £694 million, compared with a loss of £3.3 million in the previous year. Before transfer fees, profit rose from £1.3 million to £4.4 million.

Plan for euro blacklist

FINANCIAL institutions in the City are considering drawing up blacklists of firms they are not prepared to deal with because of concern that they are ill-prepared for the



Introduction of the European single currency.

They are also pressing regulators to ensure market-wide contingency plans are in place to cope with major problems with the switch-over in January. The Bank of England and the City Corporation are also asking electricity suppliers to ensure power is not interrupted during the weekend ahead of the euro launch.

The Bank yesterday appointed deputy director for market operations John Townsend as director for Europe, a new position designed to co-ordinate central banks, activities involving Europe.

A woman's signature is to appear on British bank notes for the first time from January. The Bank's personnel director, Merilyn Lowther, above, is taking over as chief cashier, when the present chief cashier, Graham Kentfield, retires.

Concrete weakens

SHARE prices in RMC, the world's largest producer of ready-mix concrete, slumped by nearly 10 per cent yesterday after the company warned of a slowdown in the UK housing market and a sharp deterioration in German trading conditions. The results were worsened by the strong pound and bad weather in the US.

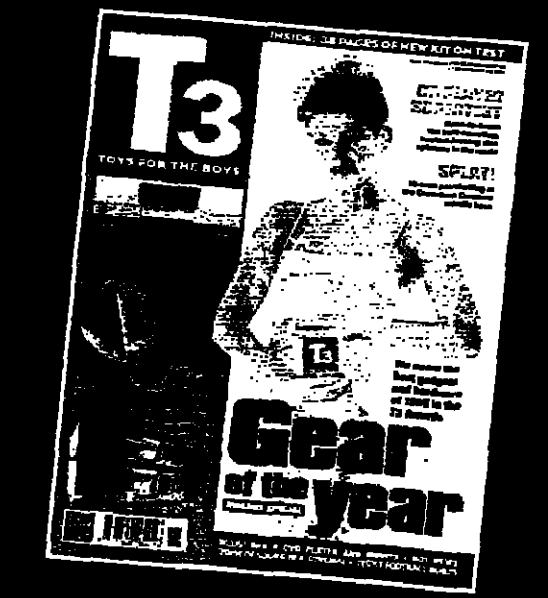
The company gets about 25 per cent of its business from East Germany, where a 20 per cent fall in construction has been worsened by appalling weather.

The profit warning came as RMC unveiled a 3.2 per cent fall in profits to £12.2 million. RMC shares fell 68p to 682p yesterday compared to the year's high of 1400p in June.

VW to show new Bugatti

VOLKSWAGEN is reported to be planning to show a prototype of a new Bugatti racing car at the Paris motor show which takes place at the end of this month, just weeks after it bought the rights to the famous marque. The new car is expected to have an 18-cylinder engine but VW has yet to decide whether to make the car for sale.

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FinanceGuardian

Dashed rate hopes take toll

Mark Atkinson, Laurie Laird and Jill Treanor

DASHED hopes of co-ordinated interest rate cuts in the world's richest economies to guard against a slump sent stock markets around the globe tumbling yesterday. The disappointment hit Far Eastern markets first, where Tokyo's Nikkei index hit a new 12-year low of 13,859.14 after a 2 per cent slide, before spreading to Europe and on to America, North and South.

In Brazil, which some pundits expect to be the next victim of financial contagion, trading on the bourse was suspended when share prices fell by more than 10 per cent.

Wall Street lost 230 points at its worst and in London the FTSE 100 index dived 158.8 points to finish at 5132.9.

The drop in share prices followed the denial by US Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan that world financial leaders were on the verge of a co-ordinated cut in inter-

est rates. His comments, before the House of Representatives' banking committee in Washington on Tuesday, echoed remarks by Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer, Europe's most powerful central banker.

"A sense of disappointment does seem to have swept across global markets," said David McCain, UK strategist at BT Alex Brown.

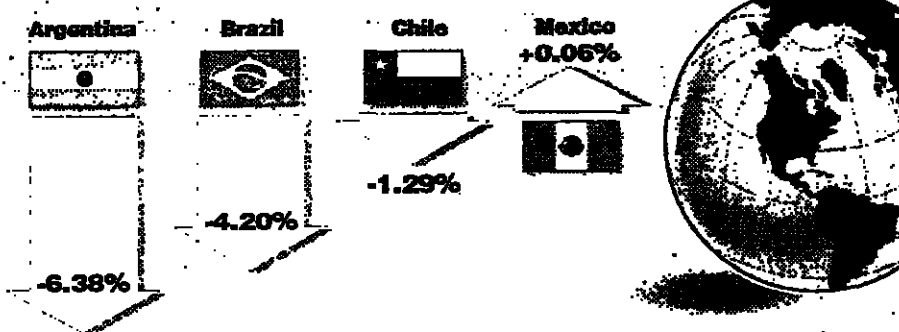
With investors wary of equities without the stimulus of cheaper borrowing, they piled into the safety of bonds, sending US treasuries to fresh highs. British securities joined in the rally.

London analysts were quick to point out that losses in the British stock market were less dramatic than those in most of the other rest of Europe.

Other European bourses to be hit were Germany's DAX, which fell by nearly 3.9 per cent, and Paris, down 5 per cent. Dutch shares slipped by 3.0 per cent to 97.55, well below the psychological 1000 points barrier. In Latin America, concern about the

Trouble in Latin America

% stock market change yesterday



region's financial health was increased by Chile's announcement overnight that it would increase its interbank lending rate target by 5.5 percentage points to 14 per cent and would make technical adjustments to the trading band of the peso.

"They widened the band for the peso, which is an effective devaluation," said Robert Lynch, currency strat-

egist at Paribas Corp. Despite thwarted expectations of co-ordinated rate cuts, the feeling in financial markets is that Mr Greenspan may still reduce the cost of borrowing in the US.

Dealers have taken comfort from his remark that the US will not be immune from the global financial turmoil.

Lower US rates would help ailing Asian economies by

weakening the dollar and taking upward pressure off their currencies as well as stimulating demand for commodities and reducing loan repayment costs.

In Russia, the rouble fell another 21 per cent to 15.85 to the dollar as concern mounted that the government would switch on the printing presses to meet demand for cash.

Twenty or so western

banks, including Deutsche Bank and Credit Suisse, furious at the authorities' plans to reschedule rouble-denominated debt, yesterday wrote to the government to demand further dialogue over the proposals, which are more favourable to domestic creditors than overseas ones.

The letter came after two days of meetings in London at which the banks decided to form a creditors' committee. They will meet again today to hammer out their demands to the Russian authorities from whom they want equal status to domestic creditors.

The new Russian government, facing the prospect of legal action from the bankers, said it was prepared to reconsider the terms of the restructuring which have already forced many western banks to admit to trading losses.

Earlier yesterday, the government had already extended the deadline, due to run out tomorrow, given to investors to decide whether to agree to the terms. They now have until next Friday to hammer out the details.

Future of European still hangs in the balance

Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

AON expected this week on the future of the European newspaper has been postponed after a rescue deal brokered by Bloomberg Business News collapsed.

It is believed that talks founded because Bloomberg's partners favoured a greatly scaled-down version of the paper which could not have afforded the high-profile senior executives currently on staff.

Andrew Neil, the editor-in-chief, and his colleague Sue Douglas spent the summer putting together two rescue packages to be considered by the European's owners, David and Frederick Barclay.

After the failure of the Bloomberg deal they are now looking at a proposal from a small publishing house, Practical Publishing, which has a distribution and printing deal with US company, Time Warner.

Insiders say that the Barclay brothers, whose group Press Holdings also includes Sunday Business, are reluctant to close the paper. Any buy-out would involve the brothers retaining a substantial stake in the paper. There is also likely to be some further financial investment.

The Barclays are under-

stood to have spent around £50 million since 1992 when they took over the title, which was founded by Robert Maxwell.

Although little financial information is available about the European, its turnover is believed to be around £6 million a year, and it is believed to lose around that much.

Mr Neil's plan for the nine-year-old paper - which has been reinvented as a business-orientated magazine - is to turn it into an A4 glossy, similar to Time or Newsweek.

Morale on the paper is said to be low. Staff who have been in limbo over their future have speculated about the timing of an announcement for several weeks, had been expecting a decision very soon.

But sources close to the negotiations suggest that the financial terms of a deal with Practical Publishing are far from agreed.

In an interview published this week in trade magazine Press Gazette, Mr Neil said that two "very attractive" partnership deals were on the table and heads of agreement would be signed by the weekend.

However, Mr Neil yesterday refused to comment on the specifics of either deal. He said: "A deal will be announced with one of the two potential partners next week."

Losses and gains on jobs front



An engineer works on a Challenger tank at the Leeds factory set for closure. Vickers has announced the loss of 1,136 jobs.

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER BYRNE

Tank factory leads Vickers rout

Nicholas Barnister, Chief Business Correspondent

BITISH manufacturing suffered another severe blow yesterday when defence group Vickers revealed plans to cut more than 1,000 jobs over the next 15 months.

The group is to close its tank manufacturing plant in Leeds, with the loss of 450 jobs, and scale down a similar operation in Newcastle, where 200 jobs will go. This follows the group's failure to secure new overseas orders for its Challenger 2 battle-tank.

Union officials and workers claimed the decision to close the Leeds plant - which has slightly better facilities than the Newcastle one - was a political ploy designed to avoid causing the Government further embarrassment over North-East job losses following the Siemens and Fujitsu closure announcements.

A worker at the Leeds factory said: "I think the powers that be decided we can't have three major sites closing in one area. That is why we are going to suffer here in Leeds. If those other places in Newcastle had not closed we would still be all right."

However, Colin Clark, chief

executive of Vickers Defence Systems, said: "The decision to focus all our tank and armoured vehicle production on one site has been taken only after the most extensive operational review and heart-searching debate."

"We have decided to consolidate all heavy armoured fighting vehicle manufacture on our Newcastle site in the interest of manufacturing efficiency. The creation of a single centre of excellence for manufacturing and design will enable us to offer the most cost-effective solutions to customers in a time of increasing competitive pressure."

But he added: "This does

not mean that Newcastle will be immune from the impact of our restructuring programme. During 1999 it will be necessary to reduce our workforce in Newcastle in line with the timing of anticipated orders."

Vickers has still to build 270 of the 386 Challenger 2 tanks ordered at a cost of £1.5 billion by the British Army. The group had been hoping to secure further orders for the tank from Greece and South Africa.

The rationalisation is part of a restructuring of the group announced yesterday by the new chief executive, Paul Buysse. A total of 1,136 jobs will go, mostly in Britain

but including 153 at the group's turbine components division in Sweden. There will be 93 jobs lost at its marine propulsion business, and 40 at its military bridges division.

First half results, announced yesterday, showed that Vickers' continuing operations incurred a £5.7 million operating loss, after charging exceptional items of £22.8 million for reorganisation costs and asset write-downs. However, sales of the continuing operations rose 12 per cent to £346.7 million. Mr Buysse said the 23 per cent reduction in staff would result in costs of about £30 million during the second half.

Bright spot US bank to site credit card HQ in Cardiff Bay

SOUTH Wales's economy received a substantial boost yesterday when it was confirmed that a leading United States bank is to set up its European headquarters in Cardiff Bay and create 1,000 jobs.

Bank One, based in Chicago, is to set up a credit card operation in Wales. The bank's investment, thought to be around £50 million, is the largest single overseas investment into the UK since Labour came to power, and comes as uncertainty mounts about future inward investment projects from the Far East.

There are questions, for example, over the future of the microchip plant planned by the South Korean LG group in nearby Newport.

The arrival of the US banking group in Cardiff was welcomed by the Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies. He described it as "an exceptional project" and said: "The fact that Bank One, with its outstandingly high reputation, has chosen Wales will act as a magnet to others."

Bank One is one of the largest credit card issuers in the US and is involved in a \$30 billion merger with the rival First Chicago Bank. It will site its new head office on the prestigious Millennium Waterfront in Cardiff Bay, alongside the new Welsh national assembly.

The £2.4 billion Cardiff Bay regeneration scheme, which got under way in 1997, covers 2,700 acres of South Cardiff, including Tiger Bay and much of the city's old docklands.

The project has secured more than £500 million of private investment and has so far created 10,800 permanent jobs, Julia Finch

Hot spot Strong pound wrecks chance of tourism jobs

BRITAIN missed out on 30,000 new jobs in tourism last year because the strong pound hit spending by overseas visitors, the British Tourist Authority said yesterday.

Chairman David Quarmby added to the chorus of complaints over sterling by suggesting that a 16 per cent rise in value against European currencies may have cost the country £250 million in earnings.

"The strong pound, coupled with the financial crisis in Asia, means that 1998 is unlikely to be any easier," Mr Quarmby said. Opportunities were lost in an area which employs 1.7 million people, or 7 per cent of the workforce.

The BTA's report shows that though overseas visitors rose by 1 per cent last year to 25.5 million, spending slumped around £12.2 billion. Britons holidaying abroad rose by 1 million to 10 million, says tour operator Lunn Poly. James Melroe

Bitter Leeds workers blame Blair

Claims of betrayal follow surprise decision on which plant will close, says Martin Wainwright

THE name "Tony Blair" was the equivalent of a swearword at the Vickers tank factory in Leeds yesterday, where closure was blamed by devastated staff on New Labour political clout in the North-east of England.

Shocked workers streaming out for their lunch-break from the huge Barnbow works - the longest building in Yorkshire - were convinced that job losses in the

Prime Minister's own North-east backyard had switched closure from the sister plant in Newcastle to their own.

"I voted for Tony Blair. I put my trust in him - never again," said a 53-year-old fitter with 18 years on the tank production line. "A political closure if ever there was one," said a colleague.

"The powers that be have decided that you can't have any more closures up in the North-east. That's why we're

suffering here in Leeds," he said. "Blair and Mandelson and Doug Henderson - he's a Newcastle MP and they've just made him minister for the armed forces."

Before managers were told at 9am and the 650-strong workforce in the canteen an hour-and-a-half later - clocking-on staff were startled to see reporters on the gates.

Rumours had been swirling since yesterday's Journal appeared on Tyneside with a headline saying that Scotswood Road plant was saved. The assumption had been that Leeds would be the lucky one of the two plants. Part of the reasoning was to be found in the hummocks and con-

crete ramps between the grey 1980s factory and the Leeds-York railway line.

"We've got the Challenger test-track here," a plant tester said, "and the 200-odd they're keeping are going to be testing and maintaining vehicles. So are we going to have Challengers going up and down the A1 all day?"

MP Colin Burgon, whose Elmslie constituency has housed Barnbow tank-makers since the second world war, was also astonished, pointing out that as recently as June, Leeds staff had been told that everything was "set fair".

Other prominent Labour figures in Leeds began a rearguard fight to portray the clo-

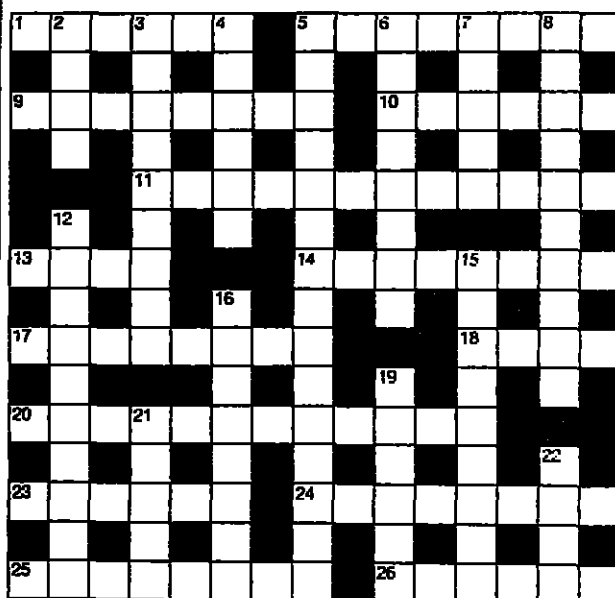
sure as the inevitable last stage of a Newcastle-founded firm's retreat from Yorkshire.

Government whip George Mudie, whose East Leeds seat includes the plant, said: "Everyone in Leeds has known for a long while that Vickers haven't put down roots here. It's been a matter of staying so long as there are orders."

Leeds city council was adjusting yesterday to a rare piece of bad news for one of Europe's fastest-growing local economies. "It is devastating - but we will be doing everything we can to help staff find other engineering work," said John Ansbro, head of economic development.

Guardian Crossword No 21,383

Set by Logodaedalus



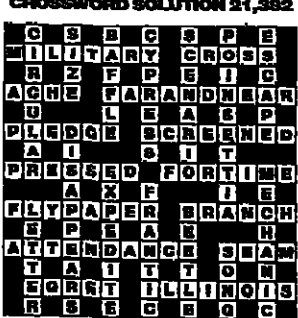
Across

- 1 He needs almost instant pastry dish (6)
- 5 Young woman in pursuit of passion in Baltimore (8)
- 9,10 Psychological confusion gives name with credit to goddess (8,6)
- 11 I miss net clumsily and fall, so not at Wembley yet (12)
- 13 Short platform, just for men (4)
- 14 Rebate let honeymooner look for fund-raising programme (8)
- 17 Make sour beer and a cat will be off (8)
- 18 I live with Blackfoot (4)
- 20 Go give us mail, sorted, in Madame Arcati's field (12)
- 23,24 Female attracts deceitful European in ghost ship (6,8)
- 25 It's irrational to hold ten back it's not fair (8)
- 26 Serious and studious circle with desire to go round lake (6)

Down

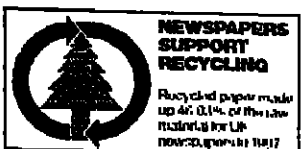
- 2 Loose one having a party (4)
- 3 Remnant to use up when going to prison for sweetener (4,5)

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